

THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE.

Contents for September, 1924.

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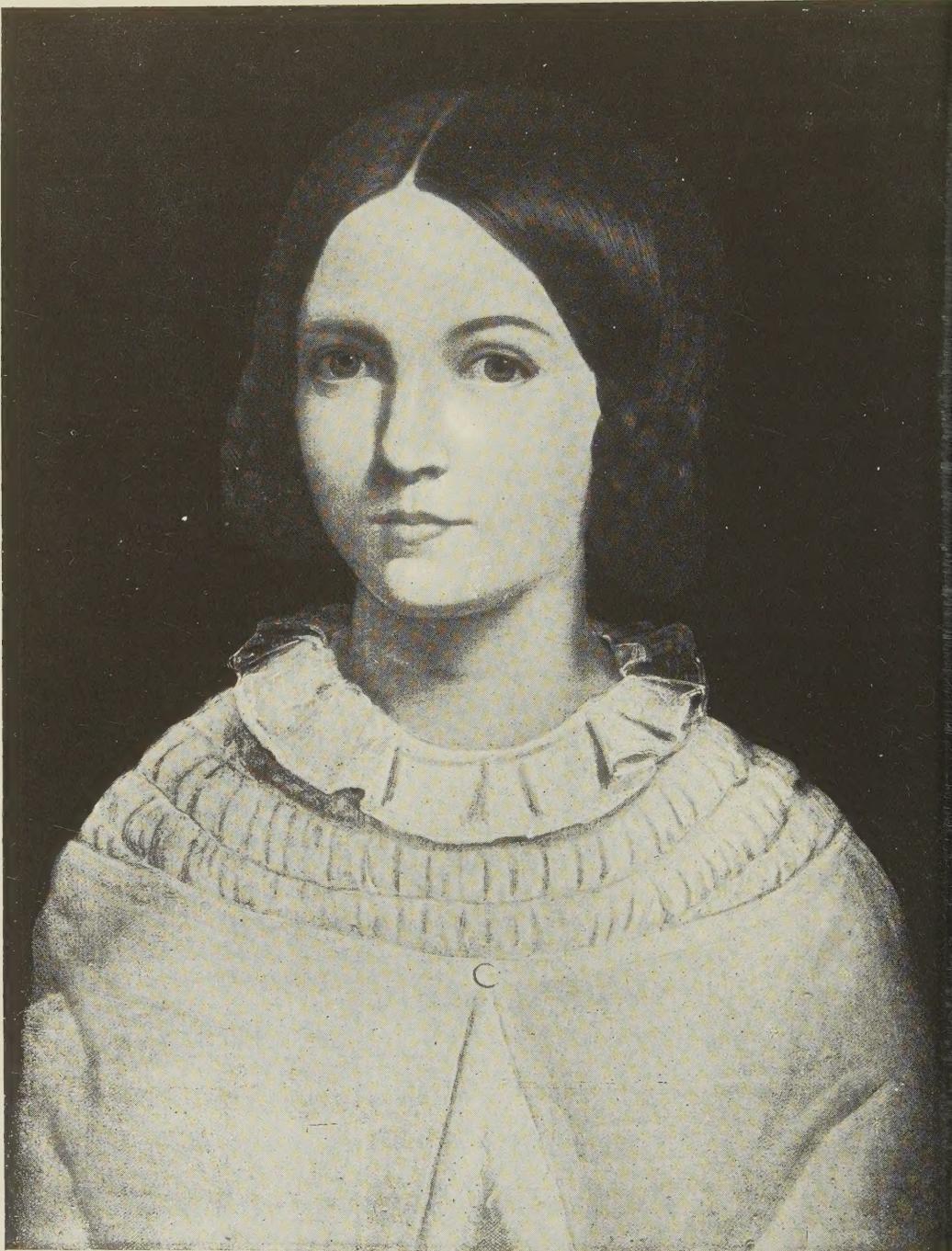
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“PORTRAIT.”

By

FREDERICK SANDYS.

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THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE.

Edited by SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN.

Vol. II.

SEPTEMBER, 1924.

No. 2.

Notes of the Month.

We follow with some interest the career of Mr. St. John Ervine, formerly a manager of the Abbey Theatre and author of some of the most successful of modern Irish plays. Mr. Ervine left Dublin during the European war for France, and in recent years he has been the principal dramatic critic of the *Sunday Observer* in London. Now, on leaving that post, he has published his reflections on the drama in a volume entitled *The Organised Theatre*. Although he has cut himself adrift from this island, we still find, in his criticism at least, much that we might expect from the Belfast man come under the influence in part of Mr. Shaw and in part of Mr. Wells. We can imagine that for many of his fellow-critics in England, a Mr. Strachey, a Mr. Forster, a Mr. Eliot, Mr. Ervine must seem something of a provincial, for all his airs of a man of the world, in the midst of things. He left us, it seems, because he disliked our "weak" illusions; but his own illusions, which are vigorous enough, may be already out of fashion in England, or at least with the advanced portion of his English audience.

* * * * *

Very little there is that escapes Mr. Ervine's sweep; for he is not among those who hold that literature only is the business of the literary critic. He has clear opinions on a multitude of subjects, and these he expresses on the slightest provocation; but there is no background, either of aesthetic principle or of philosophy, in his writings. To call Synge, as he calls him in this volume, "a middle-class invalid," explains nothing of Synge, though one understands how a writer of meditative impulse like Synge has little appeal to Mr. Ervine. He becomes more truculent when he has occasion to mention the names of Mr. Joyce, of some of the Italian Futurists, and of Mr. Gordon Craig. "No one," he writes, "has ever succeeded in pinning Mr. Craig down to a statement of fact. He would be frightened to death if anyone were to take him at his word and offer him a theatre in which to put his theories into practice." Mr. Ervine has no sympathy for the unpractical genius or talent; and here, no doubt, he shows his Ulster blood. He often seems personal and rude; but as he is a man concerned with the practical business of the theatre the character of his collaborators is a matter of importance and has to be estimated.

* * * * *

This personal violence Mr. Ervine certainly did not learn from Mr. Bernard Shaw, who is always most chivalrous where individuals are concerned. Many of his general observations, however, appear to be characteristically Shavian, as when he says, astonishingly, that soldiers on leave during the war returned

to the front with pleasure, so annoyed were they by the rotten theatrical entertainments provided for them at home. The shoemaker thinks there is nothing like leather. There is here the assumption that the mass of plain simple people are really Ervingites or Shavians, and are only prevented from enjoying the things that enlightened young men, readers of the *Sunday Times* and *Observer*, enjoy, by some hidden hand in powerful and high places. This hidden hand is that of the "old men who make wars," perhaps; when Mr. Irvine was in Ireland, it was Lord Carson, or the Nationalist politicians, or the Church—all of these, as Mr. Ervine indicated in a book which he wrote on Lord Carson, to be discomfited once enlightenment should set in. Mr. Ervine, although he finds so many stupid and bad people to be angry with, or rude to, believes that men generally are very good and very clever. His prophecies have gone awry; Lord Carson is still a popular favourite with his mob, and the young men who were to set things right, in politics, in the theatre and elsewhere, seem to be as far off as ever from achieving dominion, or even agreement among themselves.

* * * * *

His naïve illusions rather "date" Mr. Ervine, for nowadays people are beginning to question the right of authors to didacticism on matters outside of their proper sphere. In the obituary notices of the late Joseph Conrad it is, for instance, accounted to that author for righteousness that he did not wish to teach politicians or ministers of religion their business, but was content with his own art. He wrote letters to the papers on the loss of the *Titanic*, on Poland, and on the censorship of plays; but these were subjects which came within his immediate experience, and of which he had, as it were, a technical knowledge. He had no general formula for setting the world aright.

* * * * *

No one complains of Mr. Ervine either, so long as he sticks to his real theme, and his considerations on the present and future of the theatre are full of vigour and common-sense. After much experience he does not believe, it is interesting to note, in the repertory system, because it leads to the isolation of one theatre from another. He points out that the *Gaiety* in Manchester, the *Playhouse* in Liverpool, the *Repertory* in Birmingham were scarcely aware of each other's existence, and that none of them could associate with the *Abbey*, which was too small to be profitable to touring companies. Moreover, the public is never likely to support a theatre which changes its programme every night. His remedy is a sort of co-operative scheme of linked theatres in given areas, under which a dramatist's play could be performed for anything from four weeks to twelve by each circuit during a year. In all the practical part of his book Mr. Ervine understands thoroughly what he is writing about, and should receive serious attention.

* * * * *

The modern opinion that there is a considerable *bas fonds* of Celtic population in England finds confirmation in Professor Mawer's recent book, "Introduction to the Survey of English Place Names." (This is the first volume of the Survey undertaken by the English Place-Name Society, with the encouragement of the British Academy.) Professor Ekwell, who contributes two chapters on Celtic and Scandinavian names in England, shows that Celtic names are by no means confined to the western counties of England: a confirmation of the lately discovered evidence that much Celtic blood survived the Saxon invasion. What is more curious is the origin of Gaelic names in England. Most of them were probably introduced by the Norsemen from their colonies in Ireland.

Nowadays one need scarcely draw attention to the difference between the British Celt and the Irish Celt, or Gael. The latter reached Ireland direct by sea, and when afterwards he entered Scotland through Ulster it was his first visit to Great Britain. Professor Ekwell's study confirms D'Arbois de Jubainville's definitions ("Les Celtes," 1904) dividing the Celts into two families: Gaels, comprising the Irish and the Gaels of Scotland, who arrived in the north of Great Britain from Ireland prior to the Christian era; and the Gallo-Britons, comprising, first, the Gauls or Continental Celts, and, secondly, the Britons who arrived in England from the Continent in the second century B.C., and whose language has descended to the present-day inhabitants of Wales and Brittany.

* * * * *

The idea of publishing the Admission Registers of Trinity College was first mooted by the genealogists, the Rev. W. A. Reynell and P. B. Garstin, some twenty years ago. The work was finally undertaken by Mr. U. Sadler, with the help of the late G. D. Burtchaell, and we have now before us an admirably produced volume (*Alumni Dublinensis*, Williams and Norgate, 63s.) of nearly a thousand pages of names of students, indications of so much of Anglo-Irish history since the days of Elizabeth. As far as the Actual Registers are concerned, the scope of the work is limited to the period 1637 to 1846. No Register exists for the period 1593 to 1637. Three hundred names of the earliest students have been, however, supplied to this volume, thanks to clues furnished by Patent Rolls, Ecclesiastical Visitations, Fiants of Elizabeth and James, and other such sources.

The Diary of A. S. Souvorin.

Translated by S. S. KOTELIANSKY.

WE publish below some extracts from the diary of A. S. Souvorin which was recently made public in Petersburg and Moscow. Souvorin was for many years among the foremost publicists in Russia, and as editor and owner of the *Novoye Vremya*, exercised enormous influence. His diary, among many other revelations, shows that this "reactionary"—some Liberals looked askance at Tchertkhov because of his association with him—was entirely out of sympathy with the authorities and with the opinions of his own paper. Souvorin began making notes in his diary in 1893, opening with a fragment of his recollections of Dostoevsky, and ended it with the year 1909. The entries for 1905 are missing. Much of the diary is devoted to the Press, to journalists, the theatre, actors, actresses, the government, the bureaucracy, officials, and churchmen. The portraits are masterpieces. The diary was not meant for publication. In it Souvorin spoke freely with himself, relieving his soul of the truth after the day's work of defending a cause in which he did not believe.

February, 1880 (A Fragment).

On the day of Mlodezky's* attempt on the life of Loris Melikov I sat with Feodor Dostoevsky.

He occupied a poor flat. I found him sitting at the little round table in his parlour, making cigarettes. His face, still damp with perspiration, looked like the face of a man who had just come out of a Turkish bath. Probably I did not hide my surprise, for when he looked up he said: "I have just recovered from an epileptic fit."

He went on making cigarettes. Neither he nor I knew yet about the outrage; but our conversation soon turned to political crimes generally, and in particular to the explosion in the Winter Palace. Dostoevsky dwelt on the queer attitude of society towards such crimes: society seemed to sympathise with them, or rather did not know what attitude to adopt.

"Imagine," he said, "that you and I stand by the windows of Daziaro's shop and look at pictures. Near us stands a man who pretends to be looking at those pictures. Suddenly another man rushes up to him and says: 'The Winter Palace will presently be blown up. I have just placed the (infernal) machine.' We hear that. Imagine that the

* Mlodezky made an attempt on the life of Count Loris Melikov on February 20th, 1880. This political attempt on the life of the "Dictator of the Tsar's heart and thought" took place a fortnight after the mining in the Winter Palace (February 5th, 1880), arranged by Stepan Halturin.

two men are so excited that they take no heed of our presence and do not lower their voices. How would we act? Would we go to the Winter Palace to give warning about it, or would we inform the police, or tell the constable standing near to arrest those men? Would you do it?"

"No, I would not, . . ." I said.

"Nor would I," said Dostoevsky. "Why? For, surely, it is terrible. A crime is going to be committed. Perhaps we could prevent it. While making cigarettes before you came in I was thinking about this. I analysed all the reasons which should make me prevent the crime. They are weighty, substantial. And then I thought of what would restrain me from informing. The reason may seem simply ridiculous. It is the fear of being considered an informer. I imagined how I would go to the Winter Palace, how they would look at me, begin questioning and cross-examining me, offer me a reward, or, perhaps, suspect me of being an accomplice. And then it would be published in the press: 'Dostoevsky pointed out the criminals.' But is that my business? It concerns the police. They are appointed for this purpose, and are paid for it. The Liberals would never forgive me; they would drive me to despair, worry me to death. And is it normal? Everything with us (in Russia) is abnormal; that is why all these things happen, and no one knows how to act, not only in the most difficult circumstance, but in the very simplest. I should like to write about this. I could say a great many things, pleasant and unpleasant, both for society and the government, but I may not do it. In Russia one is not allowed to speak about the most important things."

He spoke animatedly for a long time on this subject. He also said he would write a novel, the hero of which would be Aliosha Karamasov. He wants to take him from the Monastery and make him a revolutionary. He would commit a political crime. He would be sentenced to death. He would seek after the truth, and in his seeking would naturally become a revolutionary. . . ." *

February 14th, 1893.

We have no governing classes. Those around the Court are not even an aristocracy, but something petty, canaille. Only under the old Tsars was there an aristocracy—under Alexey Michaelovitch, that wonderful, extraordinary man who, indeed, laid the foundation of New Russia. Peter the Great gathered round him foreigners, various adventurers, Portuguese buffoons; flotsam and jetsam from the ends of the world got hold of Russia. With the Empresses, chorister boys, veritable stallions for those ladies, ruled the land. With Alexander I. came more foreigners, Nesselrode, Capodistria, the Marquises de Traverse, to whom

* In Souvorin's article on the death of Dostoevsky (published in the *Novoye Vremya*, N. 1771, 1881), Souvorin says that the attempt on Loris Melikov's life disturbed D. considerably, as he was afraid that the government would go back to a reactionary policy, instead of following Loris Melikov's progressive program with which D. sympathised.

Russia meant very little. Even a bad Russian would be better than a foreigner. These foreigners demoralised the Russians, who humbled themselves, became slave-like, and lost their sense of self-respect.

April 14th, 1896.

Of Turgenev I have spoken already in my newspaper. To the public he appeared as a teacher. He created characters of men and women who remained models. He set the fashion. His novels were fashion journals of which he was contributor, editor and publisher. He created a type, invented the soul, and many Russians modelled themselves upon these inventions.

October 17th, 1896.

To-day Tchertkhov's *Seagull* in the Alexandrinsky Theatre.* The play was not a success. The audience was inattentive, talked, was bored. I have not seen such a performance for a long time. Tchekhov was distressed. At one o'clock in the morning his sister came to us to inquire where T. was. She was greatly worried. We sent to the theatre, to Potapenko, to Mme. Levkeyeva (the actress). The artistes were having supper in her flat. He was not to be found anywhere. He arrived at two o'clock. I went into his room and asked him where he had been. "I was walking the streets. If I were to live 'another 700 years I would not give another thing to the theatre. Enough. I've failed as a playwright."

He wants to go away at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon. "Please, do not persuade me to remain here. I can't bear this talk." Yesterday, after the final rehearsal, he was much troubled and wished the play to be taken off. He was very dissatisfied with the acting, and, indeed, it was quite mediocre. But there are defects in the play: there is little action, scenes which are interesting dramatically are scantily unfolded; too much of the play is taken up with the trifles of life, and too much is made of unimportant, uninteresting characters. The producer, Karpov, who works in a rush and is without taste, did not study the play sufficiently to master it. Tchertkhov aims high, and when I told him my impressions he listened impatiently. I am very sorry I did not go to the rehearsals, but I would have been of little use. I was so convinced that a play by Tchertkhov could not fail that I had prepared a note (for the *N. Vremya*) about its complete success. I had to rewrite it all. I endeavoured to say all the good things I had thought when reading the play.

Had Tchertkhov worked on the piece a little more, it could have been a success. I think that in Moscow they will play it better. Our public did not understand it. Merezhkovsky, meeting me in the foyer, said the play lacked intellect, for the chief quality of intellect is clarity. I gave him to understand unmistakably that he himself had never had that clarity.

* Tchertkhov was staying with Souvorin during his visit to Petersburg.

October 31st, 1896.

E. V. Bogdanovitch tells me that the (Russian) Government has bought in Rue Grenelle, Paris, where the Russian Embassy is situated and where the Tsar would stop when in Paris, eight houses for 1,800,000 francs, in order to watch the people living in that street and so make the Tsar's presence safe.

February 11th, 1897.

I went to see Leo Tolstoi, who has not been in Petersburg for the last twenty years. He is staying with Olsuffiev. There were present Gue, Baron Ixkul, and Tchertkhov. Tchertkhov is being banished abroad; a search has been made in his house, and documents relating to the Doukhobors have been taken away by the political police.

Of Tchertkhov's *Seagull* Leo Tolstoi said: "It is a trifle worth nothing, it is written just as Ibsen writes. He piles up things, and why he does it you don't know. And Europe shouts that it is superb. Tchertkhov is the most talented of all, but his *Seagull* is weak.

"Tchertkhov would die if he were told what you think about it. You must not say it to him."

"I shall tell him, but gently, and I shall be surprised if he is grieved. Everyone has weak works."

We spoke about the Tsar.

"You ought to see him, you could persuade him," I said.

"If one can't persuade one's wife," said Tolstoi, "there is no chance of persuading the Tsar."

"Well, a wife is a different matter," I said, "she is too near."

"And the Tsar is too far," said Tolstoi.

Later, Tolstoi said of the *Seagull*: "Authors ought not to be shown on the stage: we are few and people are not interested in us. The best passage in the play—the author's monologue—is autobiographical, and it might have stood alone, or appeared in a letter. In a play autobiographical passages are neither here nor there. In *My Life* Tchertkhov's hero reads Ostrovsky's plays to the carpenter, and the carpenter says: 'Anything may happen, anything may happen.' If some one were to read *The Seagull* to that carpenter he would not say: 'Anything may happen.'"

Leo Tolstoi said there remained for him not many years to live, but he wished to write and do a great many things. He persists and he works continuously.

July 23rd, 1897.

Tchertkhov has come here (Petersburg). On Saturday the 26th, I am leaving for Paris. I could not persuade Tchertkhov to come with me. He says that as he will have to go abroad in the autumn—to Corfu, Malta—he will need to return to Russia. He said he is going to translate Maupassant's works. He likes him very much. He has learnt enough French.

Here are some of Tchertkhov's ideas that he expressed to me.

" . . . Death is a cruel thing, a disgusting punishment. If after death the individuality perishes, then there is no life. I can't console myself with the thought that in the universal life I shall have finished with pains and torments. The universal life has a goal. I don't know the goal. Death arouses something bigger than horror. But when one lives one thinks little of death. At any rate, I do. And when I am dying I shall see what it is like. It is terrible to become nothing. People will take you away to the cemetery, and then return home and have tea and make hypocritical speeches. It is disgusting to think of it."

" Friendship is better than love. My friends love me, I love them, and, through me, they love each other. Love of a woman leads to enmity. In love one wants to possess the woman completely, to share her with no one, and to regard as an enemy any man who tries to please her. Friendship does not know that sort of jealousy. Even in marriage, friendship is better than love."

" If women were to take as much notice of the beauty of men as men do of the beauty of women, then men would become as conceited as women. Women accept even plain men, and this shows their understanding and commonsense, or, perhaps, the lack of an aesthetic sense."

" All our heart we give much more readily than all our money."

" A good-looking woman must have many other good qualities in order to keep faithful in marriage."

September 17th, 1899.

I have been reading *The Idiot* of Dostoevsky. I have never read that novel before. A strange writer! It seems to me that all his characters are found within himself, his soul and imagination. He has never seen such people, and, perhaps, there never have been such people—though, maybe, likenesses of them. He is describing some criminal, dark, mysterious soul. Is it the Russian soul? Many fascinating pages, many truly dramatic scenes. All his novels are in scenes. He loves conversations, drags them out infinitely, and many are very amusing. He said to me when I once asked him why he wrote no plays: "Belinsky said that a dramatic talent develops naturally when one is young. And I thought since I had begun by writing novels, and was good at it, therefore I was not a playwright."

September 22nd, 1899.

I continued reading *The Idiot* yesterday. Partly—in detail—it is a continuation of *Crime and Punishment*.

I remember the impression produced by my unsigned article on the death of Dostoevsky. I called him "teacher." Loris Melikov having read the article went straight to the Tsar (so A. A. Skalkovsky told me) and managed to get a pension for Dostoevsky's widow. Grigorovich came to me to say that he had wept (over the article). Many wept.

Dostoevsky's widow understood very well what the article had done for her. She kissed my hand.

There was a remarkable feeling of tenseness in Petersburg at this time. It was just before the murder of the Tsar. The public threw itself into buying and reading Dostoevsky's books. It was as though death had discovered him, and till then as if he had not lived. He died poor, hardly managed to make ends meet. Mme. D. used to go personally to the booksellers in the market and sell single copies of her husband's novels at a great reduction. Not until his death did Dostoevsky's works sell better than Turgenev's.

During the Poushkin celebrations in Moscow, after Dostoevsky's famous speech, I went to the platform to congratulate him. He met me in the hall and said joyfully :

" Well ! We have conquered, we've conquered ! Women kissing my hands ! "

Some girls carried a laurel wreath across the hall to crown him.

May 29th, 1901.

We have two Tsars : Nicholas II. and Leo Tolstoi. Who is the more powerful ? Nicholas II. can do nothing to Tolstoi, he cannot shake his throne, whereas Tolstoi does shake both the throne of Nicholas and his dynasty. Tolstoi is cursed by the Church, the Synod is about to excommunicate him. Tolstoi replies, and his reply is circulated in manuscript, and in the press abroad. Let them dare touch Tolstoi. The whole world would cry out against it. Our administration puts its tail between its legs. There is nothing left to Sipyagin (Home Secretary) but the consolation of what he had said to the Tsar : " If we allowed Tolstoi's answer to the Synod to be published, the people would tear him to bits." Comfort yourselves, friends, comfort yourselves, stupid rulers ! Herzen thundered (against the Russian Government) from London, Tolstoi thunders in London from Yasnaya Polyana and Moscow ; he thunders in Russia through lithographs which sells at twenty copecks. A new time is coming. It already shows itself in the mere fact that the Government has lost its head and does not know what it is doing. " Neither going to bed, nor getting up." But will this confusion last long ? I wish I could die with the conviction that arbitrary government is undermined. A storm is not needed to overturn it—a mere wind would destroy it.

August 24th, 1901.

Barbara Zurikov, a very interesting old maid, came to see me. She has published two stories. She told me a great deal about Tolstoi, about his sister, the nun, about silly Annoushka. The last named is the beautiful daughter of a rich merchant. On the death of her father her uncle, who was her guardian, made her marry a handsome young man against her will. The day after the wedding she declared that she did not want to live with her husband. No persuasions, no threats, no

sorcerers, who had been specially called in—nothing was of any avail. She would sit down against the wall and shout : “ Don’t come near me, for Christ’s sake.” After putting her in bonds, the sorcerer tried healing by prayer. But she shouted so loudly that the sorcerer said he could do nothing. She renounced all her property, with the exception of 200 roubles which she paid to the monastery, and became a nun. She has a fine voice and sings verses. In Moscow she is known as the prophetess. Leo Tolstoi’s sister, who knew Annoushka, asked him to meet her. Tolstoi went to her house, where she lived with her sister. She was sitting between two nuns when Tolstoi entered, and she looked at him for a long while.

“ Do you believe in Christ ? ” she asked him at last.

“ I do,” answered L. Tolstoi.

“ Do you believe in him as in God ? ”

Leo Tolstoi thought for a while, and said : “ Yes, as in God.”

The nuns asked her to sing to him some verses.

“ No, I’ll sing to him something different,” she said. And began singing “ Lord of Heaven,” the prayer which Tolstoi says every day. Later she said that he should not take away the sheep from Christ’s flock.

Leo Tolstoi’s sister had reckoned upon and hoped for a great deal from the visit.

Mme. Zurikov’s sister went to see Tolstoi recently. Sophie Andreyevna told her about her letter to the Metropolitan Antonius, and added : “ I have made myself famous all over the world.”

Leo Tolstoi is, according to her, grieved by his excommunication.

Mme. Z. told me a great deal, so simply, beautifully. The Zurikovs are poor. And of her poverty, too, she spoke simply. I listened attentively, and the impression I got of her is of a good woman who inspires kindness. She spoke of a former officer, a nice, kind old fellow, who copied things from Tolstoi’s dictation. He was a dipsomaniac. Countess Tolstoi cannot bear the man. Once he was called from Yasnaya Polyana to Moscow. On the way there he started a drinking bout. The Countess shouted at him when he appeared at the Tolstois’ house and drove him away. He asked Leo Tolstoi to let him go on copying things, were it even in a shed. It was winter. The Countess would not allow it. He found himself one day in the police court, having lost an eye, but he did not remember how. When Tolstoi dictated to him about Christianity, he pointed to his eye, saying :

“ Who has done this ? You are not a true Christian.”

He naively thinks that he has an influence on Tolstoi.

February 1st, 1902.

I am in Moscow. Everyone talking of Tolstoi’s illness. On Tuesday I cabled to Tchertkhov, and he replied : “ Inflammation of the lungs, situation dangerous, but there’s hope.” It was as well I cabled. Count Obolensky told me to-day that telegrams inquiring about Tolstoi are not

allowed to be received at the telegraph office. Two telegrams which I sent to my office in Petersburg (of the *Novoye Vremya*)—one referring to the *Moskovsky Listok*, which reported Tolstoi's illness, and the other, with Tchertkhov's reply—were not delivered to the office. The Order issued by the Chief Board of the Press, which Michael (S.'s son) has sent me, is stupid to the last degree. I enclose it here :

“ In view of the information received concerning Count Leo Tolstoi's grave illness, and of the chance of his death in the very near future, the Minister of the Interior, without placing any obstacles, in the event of Tolstoi's death, to prevent newspapers and journals publishing information about Count Tolstoi, or articles devoted to his biography and literary activity, yet deems it necessary that the Order of February 24th, No. 1,576, forbidding articles and news in the press which bear on the Order of the Holy Synod of February 20th and 22nd of that year, shall remain valid for the future, and that all articles and information about Count Tolstoi shall observe the necessary impartiality and caution.

“ The Chief Board of the Press, by Order of the Minister of the Interior, notifies this Order to the editors of periodical publications which are not submitted to a previous censorship.”

On January 31st my bookshop had to sign a paper to say that no portrait of Tolstoi would be shown there, and at the Chief Board of the Press they have been told that Tolstoi's portrait must never on any occasion be published. Evidently these fellows reckon on immortality ! Indeed, they are immortal fools ; and, surely, future times can produce no bigger fools. When Gogol died fifty years ago, Turgenev was put under arrest for having published an article in which he called Gogol a genius. To-day Gogol is taught to children in the schools, and memorials are erected to him. It will not be necessary to wait fifty years for memorials to be erected to Tolstoi, and for a stigma of shame to be struck on Sipyaguin's forehead. Does that stupid man ever ask advice of others, and do those others ever cease to play up to his orders ?

The political police raided Leonid Andreyev's house in search of letters. There was a bundle of letters from Maxim Gorki. But the gendarme took no notice of them, as the letters were signed Pieshkov ! (Gorki's real name. Maxim Gorki is a pseudonym.)

Tolstoi gave Russia much. He made her more glorious than any victories could ever have done. He invested the Russian name abroad with a particular significance and respect. His opinions were taken as representing the soul of the Russian people ; his genius as the national genius. That's what is important. And idiots like Sipyaguin issue orders to write of that man “ impartially and cautiously ! ” The imbecile cannot forget Tolstoi's letter to the Tsar.

September 4th, 1902.

I went to Moscow to meet Tchertkhov. I spent two days with him in his house. We spoke as friends about various things, particularly about literature. He was surprised to hear that Gorki was considered abroad a leader of socialism. "Not of socialism, but of revolution," I remarked. Tchertkhov could not see it. I, on the contrary, see it quite clearly. Both protest and encouragement are woven in his stories. His tramps seem to say: "We feel a tremendous power in ourselves and we shall conquer." I asked Tchertkhov if it were true that Gorki was ill. "He has the same disease as I, tuberculosis. But he is stronger than I. He is allowed now to live anywhere in Russia he chooses." T. also told me that together with Korolenko, he protested against the Academy's exclusion of Gorki as Academician; and that he (T.) had refused the title of Academician.

The other day I went to see Witte. He spoke with fury about Plehve. "Why do they write about him? Why don't they write of his coachman?" he shouted. "And Plehve's end was disgusting. Sipyaguin was a narrow-minded man, but he died nobly."

It is wonderful! To be killed by a bomb is "disgusting," and to be murdered by a revolver is "noble."

Witte told me how the Tsar replies when Witte reports to him.

"May I do this? I should like to do it," says the Tsar.

"No, your Majesty, for such and such reasons."

"But what about this?" the Tsar asks.

"That, too, is impossible for such and such reasons."

Then the Tsar begins asking if a certain measure can be adopted. Witte replies, reluctantly: "It is possible," or, "I'll consider it," or "Yes."

"Plehve used to behave differently," Witte continued. "If the Tsar asked him: 'May I?' his reply was: 'You may do anything; everything is right.'" Plehve thus absolved everything.

How badly we are governed, the deuce take it! When one hears all this, one understands all the rotten, disgusting things that happen, all the conspiracies and murders.

August 1st, 1904.

Stolypin told me of Count Meschersky's and Witte's conspiracy against Plehve. The idea was to appoint Witte as dictator for four years. They had composed a counterfeit letter, purporting to come from the provinces, in which it was stated that the state of things in the country was desperate; that Witte alone could improve matters, etc., etc. The conspiracy was disclosed, and Meschersky himself told the Tsar about it. I remember that just at that time Kolyshkov had paid me a visit and said that such liberal reforms as freedom of the press, the appointment of a Patriarch, and so on, were going to be promulgated. I expressed doubts.

Then he said that Plehve was against all this. What a lot of intrigues is going on behind the scenes ! I have never seen anything like it. K.'s story about the book translated by H., Plehve's natural son, is extremely curious. The book is very radical. H. translated it, and it was published at the expense of the Ministry of the Interior (Plehve). *The Petersburg Vedomosti* published an article on the book in which the writer advised Plehve to introduce liberal reforms in Finland. Plehve was indignant. The book was suppressed ; and then it was allowed to circulate again. H. wrote an article about the book in the most killingly conservative tone, and sent it to the *Novoye Vremya*. Bulgakov (the Secretary of the N.V.) has accepted the article. He told me that no alterations will be made, since Plehve himself holds the proofs of the article. I did not agree, and demanded certain alterations. H. came to me in person for an explanation, but as he is deaf and dumb, I had to write my questions and observations about his book. All these intrigues are new to me.

* * * * *

" If the intellectuals knew with what enthusiasm the people meet me, they would just sit down tight." These are the Tsar's words to a Governor of a province. Clever !

August 16th, 1904.

The deal for buying the fleet from the Argentine has not come off, for the Grand Duke A. M. wanted a bribe of five hundred thousand roubles.

There (in Manchuria) blood is running in streams—and here the Grand Dukes take bribes ! Russia is turned into a domain of the Romanovs, and they are now making money on it in every imaginable way.

August 16th, 1904.

I remember Witte telling me that the Grand Duke A. M. wanted to get hold of 180 acres of naphtha-bearing land in the Caucasus. Witte reported it to Alexander III., and the latter called together a commission, at the head of which was Ostrovsky. Ostrovsky made a fine speech, and ended by saying that if the members of the reigning house started doing that sort of thing they would bring about the ruin of the dynasty. The Grand Duke was angry with Witte for several years ; till at last they made it up. But the oil-bearing land slipped away from the Grand Duke.

September 17th, 1904.

Bulgakov told me that Mme. Plehve received twenty-five thousand roubles for the murder of her husband, and Kokovzev (the Minister of Finance) said to her son : " I hope your mother will be glad."

September 24th, 1904.

Kolyshkov told me that the Tsar ordered that the identity of the author of the article "The Tsar" in the London *Quarterly Review* should be discovered, and no expense should be spared up to the sum of a hundred thousand roubles. For this purpose a man has already been sent off to London. The Tsar suspects Witte to be the author. I think the suspicion has no ground.

July 7th, 1907.

Leo Tolstoi says that he writes when he feels like writing, just as he coughs when he feels like coughing.

July 18th, 1907.

My old years, my old words, no longer correspond to what is going on round me nor to those who live now. What am I to do here? People are interested in automobiles, in mechanics, and their soul has become mechanical.

The Common People.

By D. L. KELLEHER.

JUST talk to us. Don't make it a speech, or poetry, or anything like that. Tell us a story!

Very well; only, I'll make it several stories; about people and what happened to them, true stories; anyway, as true as I can make them. You know, the only real, true things are dates and debts, as the saying is. Every other fact of life—I am not talking about religious facts—well, everything else varies with the teller. He can't help it; his mind is not the same as the next man's. No two leaves on the tree are alike in every respect. No two people are alike. It is a good job.

NUMBER ONE.

So once upon a time (that's the real good old way of beginning), once upon a time, in June, 1907, to be accurate, I was spending a night (one of many) walking about London. I was trying to get material for a book of ballads about the night-town (I wrote the ballads, too, and later on they were all stolen from me in Switzerland, but that's not my story). Well, London in these days was full of homeless people. The Thames Embankment was their night-beat. I went down there from Trafalgar Square about half-past one. Every seat was full of loose packages of humanity sitting and lurching and trying to sleep and to keep awake for the policeman all at the same time. To see them there, you would think almost they were bags of letters, or groceries, or anything like that, flung on the benches. There is something terrible in being homeless in the night; your body grows shapeless like your mind, it is a kind of expanding here and narrowing there like the body when it is in the coffin. The Embankment in these days would put terrible thoughts into your head. Still, the night was fine, all went well, there was room for us and no jealousy right or left. That is a blessing anyway, for there isn't a thing that you won't be jealous about if you have money in your pocket. So, I went over to the wall by the Hungerford Bridge, and leaned with my back up against it. I had a good look up and down at the lovely white lamps all along to Blackfriars and to the House of Commons on the other side of me. I was well read in Rossetti that time, and I couldn't help repeating to myself the lines about the unfortunate, and how these lamps used to

“Wind on, together and apart,
A fiery serpent round her heart.”

That's what Rossetti said of some woman there on a night like this when he explored London himself, maybe. Or, maybe, he only imagined

it? A poet, alone in his own room, can imagine a world of things. But I'm making the story tedious now.

It struck two, however, and, with that, a great change came in the night. It turned cold, a wind began to blow from the south-west, and in ten minutes more the rain was pouring down. The men and women on the seats, most of them, anyway, because some didn't care how wet they'd be, cleared off up towards the Strand, or humped themselves down by the trunk of a tree. I moved off, myself, towards the big arch under Waterloo Bridge; you'd always get some kind of shelter there whatever way the wind would be. When I got there it was crowded already. Some were lying down, some were sitting up with their backs to the wall of the quay, many were standing, and making those slow and desolate movements of their arms and their heads that are the picture of despair. I took my stand with a group of them half in their mood. Just on our left there were three or four forms full length on the flags, and covered by a large strip of placards, ten or twelve pasted one over the other, a big solid paper blanket stripped by the wind and rain, or by the poor creatures' own hands, from a hoarding. The rain, driven by the south-westerly wind, was beginning to drift several yards in under the arch now. Wisps of it were blown under the edge of their paper blanket; someone lying under that edge began to get uneasy, and rustled and fidgeted about. Then, suddenly, the big yellowish smear of posters rolled back from the top, a dirty touselled old woman sat up, and then another, a younger one, but just as untidy, crawled from under. The old woman looked at her half-sleepily, and then said :

"Look 'ere, Alice, if you don't keep quiet, I'll turn you out of the bloomin' bed." And then they slid down under the placards again, and nobody, standing or lurching around, paid the least attention to them. For there was no novelty in anything for this crowd. The novelty was only for me when I heard such a gay old ruin in the middle of the night, she lying on the cold flags under a strip of dirty placard that was beginning to get soppy and pasty as the damp began to moisten it through and through.

She's dead now, for certain, and dissected by some fine student in a London College. But God be with her, anyway, and the night she made little of her troubles under Waterloo Bridge.

NUMBER TWO.

It was one of those lovely, idiotic evenings. We were finishing our three years' vanities at the University. Somebody on the Governing Body had generously invited twenty of us, prominent talkers or athletes amongst the students, to dine *en grande tenue* (I think that is equal to "full dress.") We borrowed, begged, bought dress suits. I had a family whip round and I bought mine (what a grand thing the family is after all for helping the defaulters). As I say, I bought mine, ordered it

rather, but the tailor was a tartar. There was I standing in the hall of my lodgings on the fateful evening in my flannels and shirt and with my braces at the ready in my hand. The clock showed ten, nine, eight minutes to seven—we were invited to dine at seven p.m.! At six minutes to the hour the suit hadn't come. Another student, a "country boy," who deferred to me, believing, foolishly, that I, a "townie," had some idea of how to manœuvre behind the strangulation of a stiff shirt, was waiting and wailing beside me. Two youths with the greatest calamity in front of them—failure to eat the only formal dinner ever offered! How would we ever recover from the shame of that!

At five to seven, bang on the door—"Give it to me, quick." I dress on the first step of the stairs, the other fellow, a great international footballer, "the size of a house," stands screen below me; we can hear the landlady's "Thanks be to God! If the boys were late now they'd never hear the end of it," from the kitchen behind the stairs. As seven is striking, we are out racing wildly down hill, one of us still incompletely hitched together for the banquet. In the valley below we have to pass the gaol. These are the old times in Ireland: leisurely prisoners have just arrived with two leisurely constables in an easy-going cover car. The prisoners and policemen are unloading as we reach the gaol gate. A brain wave! I leap aboard the cover car, my big friend leaps after me and nearly heels it over. The driver, who has not dismounted, taking his fare as he sat, like a king, his tribute, is nearly pitched out of his seat in the onset of the two of us. "So and so's house—we're late—past the lodge and right up through the grounds." That jarvey, he had a beard, a flaitheamhail quick, kindly, sporting sort of a man, whipped at his horse as I kept shouting through the open port hole, with the cracked glass shutter let down, at his shoulder. At every sentence he gave a yell in sympathy, "Gwan." "Gwan, our that." He just loved us, our silly-billy excitement, our gay glory, the "student" touch. In ten minutes, by almighty whipping, we were past the lodge, up the avenue, on the gravel patch in front of the house. Bursting with our silly glory, we both were out and up the steps together. I don't believe I ever said one word of thanks to the driver. The courtesy was his to the last, and the culture. "She's a grand oul' horse all through, she is so." That's all he said, and less we cared! We were into the house now, dazzled, lost, clowns.

In bed late next morning—the big fellow and I shared a "room and a niche" in the digs—"Oh," said I, "we never paid him." "Oh, my God!" said the big fellow, starting up on the bolster, and looking across at me with his mouth open and all youth's remembering idealism in his blue eyes.

Well, we started out. We called at the lodge; we went to the gaol-gate. Nobody could tell us anything further about the driver.

"We never notice them," said the turnkey. "They come here every second day with country prisoners. Your driver might be any one at all they picked up at the station, or maybe on the way up."

The big fellow, or myself, called several times again, but with no success.

"Well, he was a decent man not to come looking for his money," said I to the turnkey the last time I called.

"And I think 'tis you're the decent man to keep looking for him so long," said the turnkey back.

As for that poor turnkey—well, they took him away, one morning, or he disappeared, or, something happened to him, and I couldn't tell you any more about it. I never heard either where the man who drove the car is, or who he was. If he is driving still, I hope the years are kind to him, and that he hasn't turned cold and queer like many another one from the things they saw and the things they heard.

NUMBER THREE.

It was in 1910, I think. I was back home in Ireland in a wet and windy corner of it where a summer's day is never certain not to turn to rain. A couple of people who were spending their June to September at a quiet place they had taken near the salt water heard I was over, and they asked me to come on to them for a few days or a week. I started out from my own town by the single line railway in the evening, late, and came to the last little station, that was only a white streak of palings and a kind of a shed, after eight o'clock. It was a miserable sort of railway that had small reason for going so far and less reason for stopping short where it did ; for the sea was two miles farther on, and no one but the handful of villagers would have any business getting out before. I'm told, indeed, there would have been no trains there at all only the War Office wanted them as a reserve in those days when an invasion of Ireland from the south-west was a thing that might happen.

Well, at any rate, I started out for the walk to my friend's house through the glen road. It was a terrible lonely place, and, worse, the night was a bad one with a storm blowing and that heavy rain and hot-house air that you could nearly weigh in a scales along with it. The southwest of Ireland, Kerry and Cork, has tropical nights like that, for it is a queer climate altogether, as you might tell by the eucalyptus, the arbutus and the wonderful fuchsia you'll find in many parts of it. And I'll never forget that particular night as long as I live. The wind was angry in the trees ; it used to make galloping noises, for all the world as if a horse and car was tearing along the road towards you ; often I stopped, not knowing if it was a real horse and car I heard. Then I would go on a couple of steps again until the very same sound drove me sideways or back to listen ; for there was no light anywhere, nothing to guide you, good or bad. I must have been three-quarters of an hour turning and twisting on that road before my nerve failed me entirely and I started to make my way back to the village. I said to myself, "I will get shelter for the night in some house there, and I will go to my friends in the daytime."

But going back was as bad as going forward ; the dark itself was like a wall against you every inch of the way. I could not have been more than five or six minutes like that when I felt something shuffle close to me and then collide :

“ Oh, hallo, ‘tis an awful ould night,” said he.

“ It is,” said I, frightened and consoled at the same time by the man’s lazy guttural voice. “ I can’t find any way,” said I again, for I wanted his help now, and I had a kind of sudden panic lest he might disappear in the dark and the wind as quickly as he had come out of them towards me.

“ You can’t, sir, of course, you can’t ! Where do you want to go, sir, where do you want to go ? ”

He was drunk ; I could tell that by the way he kept muttering and mumbling between each group of four or five words. The repetition of his words, too, was the half-drunk mind trying to make sure of itself. And through the voice in which he spoke I could hear the kind of real sympathy that half-drunkenness brings on.

“ To Mrs. Green’s house.” said I. “ I was never here before except once in the daytime.” We were standing close together ; he had taken hold of the lower corner of my left coat-sleeve and kept up a slight steady pull on it, as though to be sure it was a human being he had. The storm roared and the imaginary horses raced down on us all the time !

“ I know her, sir, I know her well—a grand lady she is, sir—I’ll show you where she lives all right—‘tis a terrible ould night.” He jerked at my sleeve and we moved in some direction or other. Then with a harder pull he halted me : “ Hould on a while. I’ll crack a match. Be God, I couldn’t tell you where I am, myself.” I heard the shake of the box of matches, the big fat halfpenny box of old times. He struck three without any luck ; the fourth lit in the shelter of his hands for a second, then went out in a gust of wind.

“ We’re at the bottom of the hill, yet, then. My ould house is at the top.” He tugged me along again. He had had a momentary glimpse of me by the match light. He was curious, not too curious though, after that. (“Tis a hard thing to say, but drink will often bring out the real heart and the real good breeding in the poorest man.) “ I can always tell my ould house by a kind of a gap in the trees, sir. But I can’t see a tree or anything else to-night.”

“ I’m glad I met you,” said I. “ I was turning back.”

“ Of course, you were, sir, of course, you were. An’ you’re a stranger here ? ”

“ I’m from London,” said I.

“ From London ! From London ! ” said he nearly stopping. “ I suppose you don’t think much of this ould place so ? ” The wind and the rain did not give me much chance of talking ; or, rather, he did not well catch what I used to answer him. He was talking as much to

"keep himself going" as anything else. I think he was the kind of fellow would be always talking a little to himself. That glimpse I got of him when he lit the match showed me a blotchy face and the big stomach of a man that was fond of drink. He was, maybe, the sort of man I would not care to be seen speaking to in the daytime.

As we made our way up the hill, the drink, evidently, was gaining on him. But he was as gentle and as kind to me as if it was a lost child he was leading. I knew by the way he was staggering, though, that he must be nearly done. Then he stopped suddenly, and let go my arm; I wondered what had come over him, and I heard a bottle clink against another; then his voice :

"Hould on now, sir. I forgot all about it and they in my pocket ! Where's your hand ?" As he spoke he was rubbing a bottle against my shoulder, searching for my hand to grip it. "Go on now, sir. The cork is loose in it. 'Tis Murphy's stout—I nearly forgot—have a drink of it now—'tis a bleddy ould night."

I had enough sense to know that this was not the time to refuse a drink. I remember well one time I insulted a farmer at Mogeely by refusing a pint after he had given me a lift in his car. He never forgave me from that day till this. So I took the bottle, pulled the cork out with my teeth and had a slug.

"Will you have a drink out of it ?" said I.

"No, sir, yerra, no, sir, I've two more in m' pocket, sir ; keep that one for yourself."

He sucked the cork up out of one of his own bottles, and then I heard the air bubbles in the corners of his mouth as he drained the bottle with his breath. Then he flung it from him, and I heard the noise of the glass breaking against a wall. We moved on a piece again.

"There you are ! There you are now, sir, that's the ould gap ; my house is inside there ; yerra, the rain and everything comes down through it, sir." He was in the rapid-talking drink stage now. He went on : "They puts me in gaol, sir, often ; yerra, I'm as well off in gaol as anywhere else—an' my sister—she was a grand girl." He burst out into sobs and big sighs at that and stood up for a while crying and saying nothing. I was silent ; I did not know what to ask about her. Was she dead, or in disgrace ? No, I would not say anything. Then he began to talk as if he were *caoining* : "Above in the asylum they have her—an' Mrs. Green went to see her one time and my sister knew her all right. When I do be in gaol often I do be thinkin' of my sister alone in th' asylum. 'Tis all the same, sure, 'tis all the same."

There was nothing I could think of to say to a man talking like that. He felt my embarrassment, I think, for he stopped talking, took hold of my coat-sleeve again and led me on. It was as if he had poured out all his deepest thoughts and had nothing else to tell. At last we were on the top of the hill, and past the trees ; there was a little contrast in the blackness ; you could make out what was wall and what was sky.

"I'm ashamed to be bringing you any further," said I. "Tell me where to turn, and I'll be all right for the rest of the way." He had recovered a great deal out of the dose of drink ; that burst of crying for his sister kind of sobered him. He was calling me "sir" again in the polite way he began.

"I'll go as far as the corner with you, sir. 'Tis only two minutes more." We went on. At the turn he took my hand in the two of his : "Go down along there till you see the gap of the gate on the left, that's Mrs. Green's, sir, may the Lord spare her !"

I had a two-shilling piece in my hand to give him ; I thought I ought to do something, the price of a drink, at least.

"Yerra, not at all, sir," said he. "You're a stranger here, and I have another bottle o' stout in my pocket when I'm in home. Good night, now—you're all right, sir—you're all right, sir—good-night."

I could hear the "you're all right," repeated as a kind of a chant, three or four times more as he grew less on the road. Then something like a snatch of a song, and I was in Mrs. Green's gate.

And I heard a couple of years after that he was "above in th' asylum" himself, mad from drink, and that his sister was dead and buried, and he was too mad to understand.

The Tragedy of Zekeb.

By N. GAY.

FROM the servants' quarters in the cities and from the hovels of the labourers all along the Nile there came the shufflings of many moving feet.

Into the dull air of the Egyptian night strange sounds swelled up, and yet the people scarce allowed themselves to breathe, for Israel, in great fear of heart, was fleeing from the house of her bondage.

Out on the lonely track, along which the merchants passed into the East, a man stood. He was well shadowed on the darkest side of great tombs. He was a Jew, by name Zekeb, and because he had eaten of Egypt's fleshpots, his people cast him from among them. He, alone of all outside the fold of Israel, knew that this terrible flight would be at hand when the night settled over the desert and over Egypt.

On Zekeb, standing by the traders' pathway, there came a great fear, and his limbs shook with the weight of the terrors that were in his heart and the doubts in his soul. This vigil at the desert's gateway, kept by an outcast from his own people and a stranger among his friends, was full of peril.

Although his people had called him stranger, his heart was with them still, their hopes were his hopes, but, above all, their God was his God, though they believed him not and laughed him to scorn.

Now he told himself, when the chosen people came up in the dark, he would step out of the shadows to Moses, their leader, and say, in the hearing of all the tribes : "Behold ! I am Zekeb whom you spurned ; Zekeb who took to wife the stranger woman ; Zekeb who wallowed in the despised fleshpots of the Gentile ; yet here I am, alone, because I repent before the God of Israel and I desire forgiveness that I may travel beyond the desert with the tribe of my fathers. Were I the traitor you name me, I might have Pharaoh and all the men of Egypt here to turn you back to slavery."

Thinking of the fruit his speech would surely bear in the heart of the holy man Moses, Zekeb dreamed of the elders in the Synagogue welcoming him back with great rejoicings.

Louder and louder came the noise of the advancing multitude, and while they were yet afar there rose suddenly out of the desert before Zekeb's eyes a great Pillar of Fire. When the glory of its brightness ceased to dazzle his vision, Zekeb knew it for the sign that the Lord had sent to guide His people by night.

On the Jews, staggering with the burden of their goods, their fears

and the black darkness, the radiance from the desert burst, shattering all restraint, so that a great cry of joy went up from the flying hordes and re-echoed throughout all the land.

Pharaoh, hearing the strange cries in the night, arose, and all his army with him, for, in these later days, the men of Israel had been so silent, and there had been so many whisperings, that the Pharaoh was almost expecting a revolt.

When the men of Egypt found the shelters of the Jews forsaken, and saw, away on the fringes of the desert, a great moving light, they made ready for pursuit, but among their hosts there was great confusion. From many of their chariots the Israelites had removed the wheels ; they had cut the great golden bucklers from many belts, and in piles the spears lay shattered on the ground ; Jewish handmaidens had cleverly mislaid the cloaks and war ornaments of their masters.

Soon the head of the great fleeing column passed before Zekeb, and, in great fear and trembling, he waited—waited until Moses himself should pass.

Every time, as there passed him in the gloom, a face that was the face of a friend, he stepped forward, but, like a bad dream, there came to him in those moments a flashing memory of the hated fleshpots amidst which dwelt the woman that he loved—the woman and her babe.

That memory of his Gentile love rose hauntingly, and each time drove Zekeb back seeking the sheltering shadows.

There, amid a group of the doctors, dreamers, and sages of Israel, passed Levi, the old Rabbi of full four score years—his back bent by long years of offering sacrifice to the Lord ; his white beard reaching below his girdle. Zekeb's heart leaped, for he knew that in Levi he would find a friend.

Away in the years of his youth he had loved to drink of Levi's philosophies when they were poured out in the gatherings of his people. From Levi's lips he, the haughty youth, had taken the only words of reproof he had suffered any of his kinsmen to offer him when it was a new dream with him to take the Egyptian woman to wife. But the dream of the woman held him back, even from the priest who might have taken him to his bosom as when he was a child.

One by one there passed all those who had been his friends before the awful break : the boys who were his playmates, with whom he swore in hushed whispers that they would rise up in their manhood and lead their people from bondage ; the maids who had been the blushing objects of his first love ere he had scarce reached his "teens," and then his father, bowed with the grief that was his in the begetting of an apostate son.

They passed, and then, amid the Council of Israel, came Moses, leader, priest, and prophet of the whole people.

Tall and spare he was, with shaggy grey hair and great hands that seemed built to point the way out over the desert to where the Fiery Pillar rose to guide. His eyes reflected the red glory of his dreams. They shone

with the sheen of wonderful gold with which Israel dreamed to build a temple in the Land of Promise.

But Moses swiftly passed with the rest, and the night air closed around him, and the passing of the last rank of the children of Israel found Zekeb still undecided—torn between his old love and his salvation.

As the great battalions of refugees dwindled in his vision to a mere cloud on the desert's distant face, Zekeb fell into a reverie. Wonderful were the dreams that came to him, and he saw himself seated in the synagogue at Jerusalem and his wife with him in the place of honour.

But his dream was short, for fast came the hosts of Egypt, and terrible was the thunder of the advancing cohorts as they rushed nearer in their wild night chase into the desert.

They come, they come ; nearer and nearer they come. In the flash of a whirlwind the chariots of the Pharaoh are on him—they pass. On come the racing soldiery, and in their great chariots come the musicians, flushed in the heat of their mad gallop and in the fire of blood stirred wildly by the fierce war music of their instruments : music wild in the note, but wilder still in the echo thrown back from the empty caverns of new-wrought tombs.

Zekeb is himself again ; he stretches out his cramped limbs ; he will accept his fate and return to Egypt, to his home, his love, and to his child.

Quickly Zekeb stepped from the friendly shadow of the tombs out into the roadway, when lo ! the horses under the last chariot of the pursuing host took fright at the ghostly silhouette of his form against the great dark mass of tombs.

Hither and thither the soldiers were thrown as the great car overturned. In a moment they were up, and rushing up to Zekeb, fiercely they seized him, and many were the curses breathed on him there in the shadow of the resting-place of the dead. “ Ha ! Zekeb, thou traitor ; thou who didst eat at our tables and take to wife our daughter ; thou, too, wouldest fly. Back thou crawlst among the people who spurned thee, but in the first steps of their journey they find the taste of thy company bitter and they spit thee out.”

Back to the city Zekeb was taken by the soldiery, and for many days he lay in prison.

Outside he hourly heard the Egyptian women weeping for the men who came back no more. Then, like a thunderbolt, there burst over the land of Egypt the story of the great destruction at the Red Sea of Pharaoh and all the men of Egypt.

Up from the alleyways and down from the great palaces the women came : sweethearts, wives, and mothers, all bereft of their men.

There was a terrible icy hatred in a thousand women's eyes as they tore Zekeb from his prison, and, chanting fierce songs, led him to the place of execution.

There they fastened Zekeb to a great wooden post, and, forming themselves into a long procession, they passed him slowly in single file.

Every woman, as she drew near, undid the great buckle that fastened her cloak, and, when passing the post, she dug the long pin of it deep into Zekeb's body. There was a dual satisfaction in this terrible ritual—first, Zekeb would die, as they believed, his double treachery deserved, and, secondly, they might ever find consolation in the brown stain of Hebrew blood dulling the bright metal of their brooches. To maid and matron it would ever be a pledge of a loved one revenged.

For Zekeb, there was pain in dying as a traitor, pain in dying at the hands of women, pain in the glances of all those broken-hearted women who stabbed him and hated him, but when many of the horrible procession had passed there came to him his crowning horror.

Wildly impatient of the delay caused by the cool order and discipline of the other women, there stepped up to Zekeb the woman who was his wife—the woman for whom he had twice renounced his people, and who had come between him and his God. Her hair, in contrast to her companions, was flying loose; her eyes were bloodshot with an awful hate, and, with her pin, she stabbed him twice to the very heart—the heart that loved her.

In thick tones of unbounded hate she spoke those words, which were the last the closing ears of Zekeb should ever hear:

“They say thou art a traitor twice, but I say thrice. Thou hast betrayed thy people and thy God for Egypt, and Egypt, in turn, dost thou betray. Then, in betraying thy adopted land, thou hast betrayed thy wife who loved thee, and thy son.”

The women coming after pushed in their impatience at the delaying speech, and the woman, with her closing words, spit upon Zekeb—this he knew, and knew no more, for the glory that the old Rabbi had spoken of broke dazzlingly upon him.

Passing through the long days of their desert sojourn, Israel came to her glory, and in the fulness of time the desert came upon Egypt, and she passed for ever.

A Crow Fight.

By LIAM O'FLAHERTY.

THERE were twenty crows' nests in an oak tree that overlooked a mountain road. There were young birds in all the nests. It was in the middle of May, and the tree was green with leaves. All day the old crows filled the air for a long distance with the raucous sound of their voices.

There was a nest built on a low branch some distance down from the other nests. So that the people who passed threw stones at it. Very many tourists passed that way going to the mountains, because the road led from Dublin to the mountains. One day a party of three young men were passing, and they threw stones. Two of the young men threw two stones apiece, and then wiped their hands in their handkerchiefs and went away. They said : "Let's go on. That's hard work on a hot day like this." But the third young man was an American tourist, and he said : "No, by Golly, I'm going to stay until I show you fellahs how to knock down that nest."

He gave a little peasant boy sixpence to collect stones for him. After throwing stones for an hour or so, the American put a small stone through the bottom of the nest, and it fell to the ground. The American laughed, and went away to the publichouse farther up the road, where his Irish friends had retired to wait for him. He took no notice of the small crow that had fallen to the ground with the nest. The peasant boy also went away at a run to buy sweets for his sixpence without taking any notice of the little crow.

The little crow had no feathers on his body. Things like soft fluffy bristles grew all over him. He had fallen in a clump of long grass by the roadside and he was quite unhurt. But he was very terrified. With his mouth open and his bare wings stretched out, he worked his neck from side to side as if he were trying to unscrew it from his body. The straw from the broken nest lay all around him on the green long grass and on the white limestone road.

The old crows had fled when the stone-throwing began. They watched the affair from a high tree one hundred yards away from the nesting tree. They had grown quite used to the stone-throwing, and they were not in the least annoyed. They "cawed" and they sharpened their beaks while they waited. But when they saw the nest falling they raised a wild and prolonged and raucous "caw." They flapped their wings and made a movement as if they had suddenly become intoxicated and were falling off their perches.

The mother of the young crow that had fallen flew into the air and



AU BORD DU FORET
^
DU NARCISSE-VIDALIO DIAZ

turned a somersault three times with rage and sorrow. It was more through rage than sorrow, because she was a very old crow, and things had been going badly with her for the past month. Her mate had run away with a young female crow and gone to nest in an ash tree on the other side of the hill beyond the torrent. Two of her young ones had died on the day they came out of their shells. They died through exposure, since she had to leave them uncovered while she sought food. And now the third and last one had fallen to the ground, and she was without a nest even.

She flew back to the nesting tree, uttering harsh cries. She landed on the topmost branch and looked around. There was nobody in sight. A rabbit had already run out on to the road. He was looking about him, sitting on his thighs with his ears cocked. The old mother crow swooped down and landed in the middle of the road. She thrust out her chest, blinked her eyes, reached out her head sideways, listening. She "cawed" gently. An answering mumble came from the long grass by the roadside where the young crow lay. The old mother crow immediately darted over. When she saw the young one, sprawled on its belly and with its distended mouth raised in the habitual manner to receive food, the old mother crow became overcome with emotion and she broke out into a series of thunderous and melancholy "caws." She jumped and ran about the road and flapped her wings like one gone mad.

The other crows gathered about. Some flitted on idle wings. Others sat on the fences that bound the road on either side. Now and again some would walk over sedately, reach out their necks and peer at the youngster that had been unnested. There was a terrific din.

Then the old mother crow flew up into the tree and darted about from branch to branch as if she were seeking something. Then she flew back to the road. She seized her young one in her beak and in her claws. With a sudden swoop she arose and landed in the fork of the lowest branch of the tree. The other crows followed her, "cawing," urging her on as it were. She rested for several minutes in the fork of the branch, fondling the young one. The young crow was terrified once more by this fresh experience, and it held its mouth open, as if it were expecting something to attack it.

Then the mother lifted it again in her claws and flew upwards with a mighty effort. She landed on the second branch from the top. There were four nests there, made along the branch, supported by the twigs that grew thickly on either side of the branch, like the prongs of a comb. She planted her young one in a nest where there were two young crows ready to fly away. She attacked the two young crows furiously with beak and claw and drove them out of the nest. Then she spread herself out over the young one and waited for the attack from the parents of the young crows that she had expelled. The two young crows that had been expelled spread their wings and tried to soar. But their bodies were yet too heavy for their wings, and instead of rising they fell slantwise and

landed clumsily on their breasts in the field, about one hundred yards away. There they lay, panting.

The two old crows rose screaming. They attacked the old mother crow with all their might. They showered blows on her back and head. They rooted at her with their claws and sent black feathers flying from her scratched back. She fought them as best she could in return. But principally she clung with all her might to the nest, determined to die rather than be ejected or expose her young one to death. The other crows gathered about the fighting ones. There was a terrific din, like that of an argument among men about politics.

The fight lasted fully a quarter of an hour, and then it stopped. The old mother crow was battered, but she still remained on the nest. The other two crows suddenly flew away to the field where their young ones had landed. For some time they strutted about "cawing" to their young ones, sharpening their beaks and flapping their wings and making growling noises as if they threatened to go back again to the mother crow.

But they obviously thought better of it. Instead they set to teaching their young ones how to scratch the earth and drag out worms without cutting them with their beaks, and thus losing the better part of them.

Susan Glaspell.

By ANDREW E. MALONE.

THE drama in America is gathering strength and individuality.

Little more than a year ago Europe became aware of Eugene O'Neill ; it must now recognise a very considerable dramatist in Susan Glaspell. Behind these two is a host of playwrights of more than average quality : Elmer Rice, Channing Pollock, Lula Vollmer, Gilbert Emery, and many others. While it remains perfectly true that one swallow does not make a summer, it remains equally true that a number of swallows certainly indicates that "Sumer is icumen in." The number of considerable dramatists in the United States at present is an indication that within a comparatively short time American drama may lead in quality as well as in quantity. In proportion to its population and its wealth America has yet done very little for drama. The plays of European writers provided the theatrical fare for American citizens, and upon American citizens depended, to a very large extent, the financial status of European authors. There is now a perceptible change ; plays which have long run in America are now as often of American as of European authorship. *Sun Up*, by Lula Vollmer, and *Tarnish*, by Gilbert Emery, have shared their great successes in New York with *Saint Joan* and *Outward Bound*. This emergence of the distinctively American drama is one of the most significant things in our time. America is beginning to examine its conscience, having just lately discovered that it had a conscience of its own, and that interestingly significant examination is passing into literature as in *Main Street*, *Poor White*, *The Three Black Pennys*, *The Hairy Ape*, or *Inheritors*. This searching of conscience is certain to be very good for America—it will make Americans more tolerant and tolerable.

Because of this, one is glad to welcome Messrs. Ernest Benn's new series of plays, entitled *Contemporary American Dramatists*, of which the first three volumes have recently been published at four shillings each. All three are by Susan Glaspell, and it may be said at once that they are three of the most arresting plays yet published by this enterprising firm, to which the contemporary drama owes so much. Hitherto Susan Glaspell has been a name only on this side of the Atlantic ; but as these plays become known her name will loom larger and larger, as that of a most original and accomplished dramatist. That she already holds a prominent place in American drama is evidenced by the notes on the covers of these volumes. On the cover of *The Verge* it is stated that Susan Glaspell is, "in the opinion of many American critics, the most important of contemporary American dramatists, while, in the opinion of almost all, she vies for the first place with Eugene O'Neill." Of *Inheritors* the New York *Nation* has said : "The first play of the American Theatre in which a strong intellect and a ripe artistic nature have grasped and set forth in human terms the central tradition and

most burning problem of our national life, quite justly and scrupulously, equally without acrimony or compromise." Of *Bernice* it is said: "This achievement is typical of Susan Glaspell's power as a dramatist, just as the slow building up, through the speech and actions of others, of a rare and vital personality, is characteristic of her extraordinary psychological insight." These claims may seem to be extravagant; they are certainly very high, and they make the reader expect much. It must be said that the expectation is more than realised. Susan Glaspell is certainly a remarkable and capable dramatist.

Dissatisfaction and aspiration are the driving forces in *The Verge*. It is a symbolist play, which seems to derive from *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Wild Duck*. Life is too awful, and it might be so different; so much better had humanity the courage, as it has the power. So far is Susan Glaspell from that satisfaction with things-as-they-are, which is so markedly American, that Bolshevism seems conservative beside the revolutionary ardour of her Claire in *The Verge*. A yearning which amounts to a faith keeps Claire on the verge of that Something which is always "beyond the horizon." Life, as lived by humanity, is not enough; to make life better and happier is not enough; only courageous adventuring and experimenting justify life, break through, even if the only result be disaster and chaos! That seems to be the philosophy of Claire. The curtain rises upon a greenhouse that is also a laboratory. Outside there is snow, and patterns have been made upon the glass "as if—as Plato would have it—the patterns inherent in abstract nature and behind all life had to come out, not only in the creative heat within, but in the creative cold on the other side of the glass." Claire is experimenting with a plant which she calls the Edge Vine. This plant is being given an opportunity of breaking out of the ordinary and being "different," but it fails to take advantage of its opportunity. "It's had its chance," Claire says; "it doesn't want to be—what hasn't been." There is the symbol and the reality; an exposition, in American terms, of the philosophy of *Penguin Island*. The vine rejects its opportunity—Claire does not have the opportunity. Another plant is tried, called Breath of Life. All the heat in the house, she insists, must go to Breath of Life, and her very pedestrian husband, Harry, with his friends, Tom and Dick, must eat in the greenhouse. Claire had married Harry because he was a flying man. Flying would liberate man! She would be free, free as air. She would "be where man has never been! Yes—wouldn't you think the spirit could get the idea?" Even the war was a failure. "The war didn't help. Oh, it was a stunning chance! But, fast as we could—scuttled right back to the trim, little things we'd been shocked out of." The chance was lost because "the spirit didn't take the tip." "Plants do it. The big leap—it's called. Explode their species—because something in them knows they've gone as far as they can go. Something in them knows they're shut in to just that. So—go mad—that life may not be imprisoned. Break themselves up into crazy things—

into lesser things, and from the pieces—may come one sliver of life with vitality to find the future. How beautiful. How brave." Claire's daughter, Elizabeth, thinks that "the object of it all is to make them better plants." Claire, enraged, uproots the Edge Vine to strike Elizabeth with it, but is prevented by one of the men as the curtain falls.

Claire is next seen in a ruined tower with her husband's friend, Tom. The tower is lit by a lantern which throws on the wall a pattern "like some masonry that hasn't been." Somewhere about the Barcarolle from *Hoffman* is being played on a gramophone. Claire says, "Don't listen. That's nothing. This isn't that. (Fearing.) I tell you—it isn't that. Yes, I know—that's amorous—enclosing. I know—a little place. This isn't that. (Her arms going around him—all the lure of 'that' while she pleads against it as it comes up to them,) We will come out—to radiance—in far places. (Admitting, using.) Oh, then let it be that! Go with it. Give up—the otherness, I will! And in the giving up—perhaps a door—we'd never find by searching. And if it's no more—than all have known, I only say it's worth the allness! (Her arms wrapped round him.) My love—my love—let go your pride in loneliness and let me give you joy." In the end she strangles Tom, for what reason it is very difficult to comprehend, and she passes from the scene singing hymns.

The Verge is a play of absorbing interest. It contains much that may be said to be nonsense, but it is shot through with passages of great beauty. Technically the play is perfect; every incident and every line of dialogue are fraught with direct and cumulative significance. On the stage it should be thrilling, but it will require acting of a very high order. Fresh from its triumphant performance of *Henry IV.*, perhaps the Dublin Drama League will give the public an opportunity of seeing *The Verge*.

Inheritors is objective and ironic. Yearnings there are, but they are yearnings that are realisable in this life and in this world. The curtain rises on the Morton sittingroom, in the Middle West, in 1879. The Mortons had been pioneers, taking the land from the Indians, and Felix Fejevary, a political refugee from Hungary, had settled close by. Silas Morton says to Fejevary: "I'm seeing something now. Something about you. I've been thinking a good deal about it lately—it's something to do with—with the hill. I've been thinkin' what it meant all these years to have a family like yours next place to. They did something pretty nice for the corn belt when they drove you out of Hungary. Funny, how things don't end the way they begin. I mean, what begins don't end. It's another thing ends." Silas Morton's dream is to see a college on the hill, which the red men loved, where "the best that has been thought and said in the world" would be studied and acted upon. "That's what the hill is for! (Pointing.) Don't you see it? End of our trail, we climb a hill and plant a college. Plant a college, so's after we are gone that college says for us, says in people learning has made more: This is why we took the land!"

The Dublin Magazine

The college is founded, and in the second act the fortieth anniversary of the opening of Morton College is being celebrated in the year 1920. Felix Fejevary, son of the Hungarian refugee, is discovered in conversation with Senator Lewis. "Morton College did her part in winning the war," he says, "and we're holding up our end right along. You'll see the boys drill this afternoon. It's a great place for them, here on the hill—shows up from so far around. They're a fine lot of fellows. You know, I presume, that they went in as strike-breakers during the trouble down here at the steel works. The plant would have had to close but for Morton College. That's one reason I venture to propose this thing of a state appropriation for enlargement. Why don't we sit down for a moment? There's no conflict with the State University—they have their territory; we have ours. Ours is an important one—industrially speaking. The State will lose nothing in having a good strong college here—a one-hundred-per-cent. American college." Silas Morton's gift has become the exact opposite of the old man's intention. It is a "hundred-per-cent-American" institution; snobbish, narrow, mean and vulgar, with no more relation to scholarship and fine thinking than the State Senator. American virtues are merely British vices transplanted and exaggerated. Silas Morton tried to prevent it being so, but he failed. His college merely stifles thought, restricts liberty, salaams to wealth. Professor Holden, the college's only scholar, is threatened with dismissal because he is a Radical; Jordan, a brilliant student, is expelled because he is a conscientious objector; Hindu students are mauled for daring to quote Lincoln, and in the ensuing melee, Silas Morton's granddaughter, Madeline, is arrested for aiding the Hindus and assaulting the police. The third act introduces the plant motif of *The Verge*. Ira Morton, the son of Silas, takes no interest in the college, his only interest is the improvement of his corn. The corn improves with each generation, but despite the college, mankind does not improve. The corn which improves and spreads is contrasted with man, who grows mean and narrow. All this is emphasised, and the play ends with the compromise of Professor Holden and Madeline going to jail because she only realised Silas Morton's ideal.

Inheritors is deep and bitter satire. It is a strong, definite attack upon that jingoism which masquerades as nationalism, and which makes nationalism itself a menace to civilisation. The gradual perversion of the spirit of freedom is a grave problem for America—it is no less grave for the people of other nations. Here is the Ibsen of *An Enemy of the People*; the satire is more obvious, more crude, more American. But *Inheritors* is a very fine play, technically as perfect as *The Verge*, more definite in its meaning, and, therefore, likely to be more popular in its appeal.

The third play, *Bernice*, somewhat resembles *The Verge*. It is in three very short acts which develop a personality that never appears. By the speech, action, and suggestion of five people a sixth person is made

not only definite but dominant. Bernice is dead, not long dead; her corpse is still in the house with her father and an old servant when the curtain rises. They await the arrival of Bernice's husband, Craig Norris, and her friend, Margaret Pierce. About these people is woven the most common and the least noticed of human tragedies—the tragedies of imperception and incomprehension. Eyes do not see, minds do not understand; and there is sorrow, misery, and waste. Remorselessly, every word striking, this tragedy of quiet works to its end. It is a wonderful play.

Upon meeting the statement that Susan Glaspell "vies for first place with Eugene O'Neill," the first impulse is to smile derisively. Having read these three plays the attitude must change. The two dramatists have little in common save their nationality. In technique Susan Glaspell is undoubtedly the superior of Eugene O'Neill. There is no trace of O'Neill's loose construction about these plays; they are as perfectly constructed as a first-class watch. There is little of O'Neill's humanity about them either. Except in *Inheritors* the characters are somewhat remote from life, they are the exceptions who feel deepest and perhaps see farthest. Yet the plays are essentially studies in personality. Behind the body, behind the mind, is the searching ground where Susan Glaspell finds her treasures. She is a dramatist of the Ego—not so flamboyant as Toller, and with the ironic pity of Galsworthy. The psychology is as scrupulously studied as is that of *The Emperor Jones*, without any of the wildness of setting to heighten the effect. These plays would be tremendously effective upon the stage, and it may be hoped that an opportunity will soon be afforded to playgoers to make acquaintance with the work of one of the most interesting dramatists of to-day. Of course, there are the echoes from others in her work, but the echoes are all arranged to produce not only harmony, but a powerfully vivid personality, which is a very welcome addition to contemporary dramatists.

An Irish Pastoral.

By GEORGE BUCHANAN.

(The scene may be on a slope near Knockdhu, County Antrim.)

Samuel.

May is the brightest month in all the year ;
The country glows with promises of crops,
Bigger and better than we've known ; and though
These fields lie quiet in the sun, I dream
Of the gay whir of reaping, like the whir
Of grasshoppers, sounding about the land.
But meadows, hedges, woods, and the far sea
That fringes the horizon are unstirred
And peaceful now.

(Enter Mathew.)

Come, Mathew, and sit down
Here, on this heather tuft or on this stone
Covered with moss. To-day outshines all days
That, since this year began, have come and gone.
For a rich sun and a rich earth, thank God !
Look, Mathew, at that slope where hand in hand
Brown furrows creep uphill and rub, you'd think,
Those great white clouds puffed out like a ship's sails.

Mathew.

It's a good sight, and on a day of sun
And bated wind sets farmers in good heart.

Samuel.

When such a day comes up out of the rout
Of cloudy and dark days and winter days,
I cannot but feel younger. This last hour
I've hummed and sung and whistled like a boy.
The hollow air is echoing bird voices
Which shout in the same glee. Behind this nook
A starling kept on singing, as I thought,
" You're a king . . . you're a king."

Mathew.

When I walked
Up that old lane where sprawl out, here and there,
Grasses and coltsfoot leaves on the white stones,
I heard the stream rush merrily nearby ;
And in a pool bordered with iris blades
I noticed how the sunlight underneath
The face of the water scattered like a net,
Golden and trembling.

Samuel.

I like to linger here
And talk beneath the shadow of this bank,
While the hot sun above my head beats down
Warm on the countryside we overlook.
See in that field those children playing games :
Two are in white and one in a green dress
And one in blue, and there's a little one
Who runs behind and wears a crimson cap
And a white crumpled dress. Or do they run,
With naked feet in the cool grass, to pluck
Gay celandine and primroses ? Those whins
In a wild yellow panic at their back
Make it a scene would set even old men
To frolic and to mirth. The very trees,
At hand, look on as they would join the fun,
And wonder why their shadows do not dance.

Mathew.

It's good to watch them, yet it's sad to watch,
Because my daughter who, by right, should now
Scamper with these is sick. I came outside,
When she, white blossom, fell asleep, and stood
A long time with my elbows on the gate,
Staring down at the weeds among the stones
That strew the path. Later I spied you here.
I told Martha to wave if in that room,
Where speckled sunlight through the window falls,
My sick child woke or cried or aught befell
Untoward, for I would hear your talk a while,
Your soothing talk, and ease the fret in my heart
Hearing . . . or hearing one of those wild songs
You put together as you roam the hills.
I loosed the rusted chain that held the gate,
Came up the lane and through that field.

Samuel.

I see

Across the fields the blue smoke drifting up
 From the low chimney of your home. No wind
 Moves it, and it goes straight into the sky
 And loses itself there. You tell me, Mathew,
 That all's not well under that brown thatched roof.

Mathew.

She was brimful of mischief, Samuel,
 And gave us little peace ; but little peace
 We'd have if she were gone—only sad hearts.
 All children are a trouble, Samuel,
 To rear, a trouble we love taking. Mary
 Was restless as the ears of a horse. Now
 There's no excitement in her eyes, she's pale,
 And is near something we've not known. O God,
 If under her shut eyelids she see death !

Samuel.

You have more tears than grief, for she's not dead.

Mathew.

The physician who has seen her is uncertain
 Whether she'll live or die. I fear she'll die.
 O ! I could pace for hours along the roads,
 Piebald with sun and shadow. I can't sit
 Always beside the hearth ; and anxiousness
 Makes working an uneasy doleful task.
 What would I do supposing she were gone ?
 To be bereft is to fare worst of all.

Samuel.

Yet, after, you would find, because the dead
 Are dead by fate, solace in thinking well
 That fate had knowledge, say " Martha and I
 Had a child Mary, but she was not spared
 To grow to womanhood. God's will be done."
 So we all do, for there's no other way
 To live beneath the chances of the world,
 As death, departure, poverty, but this :
 To acquiesce with fate ; or we would burn
 Deeply at heart and rage throughout our time ;
 And since that's futile we embolden grief
 To dwindle with the years.

Mathew.

You have wise words ;
But my mind turns like some old water-wheel
Under the mill-lade of my misery
Slowly and slowly the one way it's driven,
And thought falls feebly down.

Samuel.

O Mathew, listen,
You grieve about what has not come to pass.
Give over for a while. I'll sing a tune
Made near the hill-top, in the bracken here,
While the sun sank and dim grey clouds were combed
Down over the place that flamed. But, no, no,
It was a lonely tune. A rhyme I shaped,
While stray cloud-shadows raced across the ground
Under the sun to-day, is more at one
With my intent.

Mathew.

It does not matter which ;
I will be glad of aught that keeps my mind
Thinking of other things than that one thing,
For I have not the patience horses have
That labour in the field.

Samuel (sings).

With crowded hair and golden,
And a flurry of feet,
Gay girls and brave girls
Come and go and meet ;
Their faces and their finery
Make the heart dream,

But, if I had my way
Beside an alder in May,
I'd fling a stone into the stream
To watch the silver spray.

They tell me men make riches,
If they work in a town,
Long streets and broad streets
Winding up and down ;
And they have wealth and goodly wives—
All their heart's dream.

*But, still, I'd sooner stray,
Beside an alder in May,
And toss a leaf upon the stream
To watch it drift away.*

Mathew.

You have a voice with all the sweetness in it
Of wild air on the hills. Do you wander
From place to place and gather rhyme and tune
As bees suck honey from a hundred flowers ;
Now lingering where twisted ash trees shade
A red cow from the sun ; now listening
To children laughing in a wooded glen ;
Or whistling on a road when night comes down
And puts a soft look on the leaves ? I've seen
You by yourself, musing your time away.
And yet, when no one else lives in your house,
Can singing make amends for loneliness ?
When you unlatch your door or pause a while
Beside the riverbend, does no void come
That whispered rhymes can't fill ?

Samuel.

Time after time,

But they were separated far, I've known
That pain ; though I'm not discontent, because,
Kneeling to cool the wrists on a hot day
Or idling at the brink of that smooth stream
Before my threshold, thoughts and bitter thoughts,
One after one, seem carried down the flood
Till the mind's bare ; and quiet, like a bird,
Fluttering to the ground from hidden boughs,
Preenes itself on the flagstones.

Mathew.

Would that I
Had quiet in my heart ! Yet if I went
Down to the stream beyond the stepping stones,
Hung over with green thorn, I'd not find rest,
Being too sorrowful.

Samuel.

In the sunlight
The amber stream goes winding round brown rocks,
And pebbles glimmer on a shallow bed.

You'd loiter on the bank, hearing the cry,
The hoarse sweet cry of a wood pigeon. For sure,
'Twould pull down ecstasy about your ears.

Mathew.

We are as ploughed and fallow—different fields ;
Whatever is your joy, whatever mine,
Save at some tangled hedgerow never meet ;
And there grow silver goose-grass and the vetch
And white wild parsley.

Samuel.

The sunny weather
Has filled me with obstreperous joy. O, Mathew,
Why do the birds sing, and the clouds lean laughing,
And the cobwebs under the yewtrees gleam,
And delicate winds won't break them ? Why do we
Sit talking here unhappily ? O, come,
We'll run and clamber up the rocks and caper
Till we are tired, and then loll drowsily.

Mathew.

Until God's hand does all my sorrow off,
Laughter in sunlight is pretence for me,
Though I'm not thankless for your happy words.
But Martha waves. Look at the trembling white
Beside the privet hedge. Now to be gone.
God send it is not the worst news I'll hear.
Death would be wrong and she only a child . . .
Death would be wrong. . . .

(*Mathew goes out.*)

Samuel.

If Death came elbowing
Into the glory of this day, the chestnuts
And the ashtrees and the beech would spread their hands
As suppliant for the soul, and (could I hear)
Whisper a prayer to Death to let alone. . . .
And should he not forbear, I'll build a rhyme,
With sorrowing words and with a mournful tune,
Telling the great wrong everywhere, of how
A child is dead—a leaf is fallen in spring.

Tcinderella.

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS.

Translated from the Russian by GERALD MacNAMARA.

*Produced for the first time in the Little Theatre of the Sore Eyes,
Moscow, 1865.*

Characters in the Play :

<i>Baron Ivan Ivanitch Vodkanova</i>	..	..	Owner of ten thousand (mortgaged) souls).
<i>Dashenka</i>	..	..	Sometimes called Babakin (his second or third wife).
<i>Contralto</i>	..	..	..} Her Ugly Daughters ; also Ugly Step-sisters
<i>Soprano</i>	..	..	..} of Tcinderella.
<i>Tcinderella</i>	..	..	Their Step-sister (daughter of the Baron's first or second wife).
<i>Prince Tcharmink.</i>			
<i>Brigadier-General Nicholay Howitzeroff</i>	..	..	A Germo-Russian Officer.
<i>Fyodov Itchikoo</i>	..	..	Captain of Artillery.
<i>Andrey Ofaltoff</i>	..	..	A Second Lieutenant.
<i>Nastyarina</i>	..	..	A Lady in elastic-sided boots.*
<i>Katchika</i>	..	..	A Servant Woman.
<i>Kleptomania</i>	..	..	A Lady's Maid.
<i>Marfa Stepnivitch</i>	..	..	A Russian Dancer.
<i>Bombanya</i>	..	..	A Young Student and Nihilist.
<i>Katalepsky</i>	..	..	A Young Poet.

The action of the play takes place in a provincial town in the Government of Tchuktcheu-lidzo (Russia).

* Elastic-sided boots were invented in 1864, the year before this play was produced.

ACT I.

In the kitchen of Baron Ivan Ivanitch Vodkanova, mid-day ; but as the apartment is underground this does not matter.

The stage is lit from a large four-poster stove and a tallow candle.

Two serfs lie fast asleep (drunk) on the top of the stove. (This trick of lying on a stove is only known to Russians.—Translator.)

At the back of the stage a rickety stair leads to nowhere.

There is a huge deal table in the centre of the floor, on which are copper plates with food—horse-flesh, cabbage, cucumber, garlic, sweet and bitter omelettes, etc., etc.

In the corners of the room there are a number of second-hand icons.

There are two samovars on the table, one marked "tea" and the other "vodka" in Russian characters.

A large cask is on the right of the room, from which the maid draws kvass in buckets, and carries upstairs.

There is an "at home" in the drawing-room, and music can be heard when the kitchen door is open

Contralto and *Soprano* are playing a duet on the piano. As these old maids are very ugly, the music is exquisite.

Baron Ivan is sitting on the kitchen table, a cucumber in one hand and a lemon in the other. At intervals he bites off a piece of Tartar horse-flesh, washing it down with vodka taken out of a wooden mug. At the end of the act he drinks from the *tea* samovar, but this is when the vodka is finished. (The Baron is a sort of Russian Mr. Jiggs.—*Translator*.) He is a man of sixty, bald-headed from ear to ear, but nature has acted generously with him in regard to beard. What can be seen of his clothes are shabby; he wears top boots, and a knout or “cat” is stuck in his belt. Traces of drink are apparent in his eyes, nose, and more obviously on his beard.

Tcinderella, a young girl, is seated on a low stool close to the stove. Although poorly clad she looks a princess. Her luxurious hair is flax-like in colour and texture. It is very evident that her mother was either a Caucasian or a Cossack.

Baron Ivan.—Katchika ! Katchika ! Katchika !

Katchika (appearing at the scullery door).—Were you calling me, *Baron Ivan Ivanitch Vodkanova* ?

Baron Ivan.—Don’t bother me. I was only sneezing.

(He lies down on the table, falls asleep and snores in Russian. After a little he wakens with a cry of rage.)

Tcinderella.—Poor papaykashin (diminutive form of “papa”), whatever is the matter ?

Baron Ivan.—My beard is hurting me. (He sits up on the table; *Tcinderella* approaches him.)

Tcinderella.—Misha, misham. (She loved her father.) It is no wonder you were in pain—your beard is full of fish bones; let me comb it for you. (She walks over to a tool chest in a corner and produces an agricultural implement and combs his beard and the fish bones rattle on the paved floor.)

Baron Ivan.—Easy now. Ach ! The cholera take you !

(The two ugly sisters appear at the top of the stairs and glare at *Tcinderella*. The fresh milk in the pail turns sour immediately.)

Contralto.—Come here, Tcinders !

Tcinderella.—Yes, misha acushla.

(She could be sarcastic in foreign languages.)

Soprano.—We want our backs done.

Baron Ivan (pulling at his knout).—You do, indeed.

Contralto.—Shut up, bother-the-house.

Tcinderella (after the backs were “done”).—I suppose you are going to the Prince’s ball to-night.

Contralto.—Mind your own business.

Soprano.—Go on with your work, Tcinders.

(They leave.)

Tcinderella.—Misha papa, I have something on my mind—something I must say to you.

Baron Ivan.—Koffitop (untranslatable).

Tcinderella.—I have often thought what a different Russia it would be, what a different world it would be, if only our samovars laughed—they never do—they don't even smile; that's why Russia is such a sad country, and it is so cold in Russia, especially in winter when the landscape is clothed in snow (she pauses for breath), so bitterly, so unkindly cold. How I hate myself for not hating people who hate me—people that if I only hated half as much as they hate me how hateful I could make them feel to themselves. (Another pause.) Ah, it is cruel. For two roubles—aye, even for two kopecks—I would throw myself into the Danube if it were only in this part of the country—aye, or even the Volga, frozen as it is, frozen hard in frost. (A pause.) O, that frost—that frost. There will be skating in heaven—I know it—and dancing. We will dance in heaven, papa, you and I, and the Prince will be there—the beautiful Prince with the star on his breast and the medal from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I see it all clearly, as a photograph. Photography is a great art—or is it a science? Good photos are put in frames—so are cucumbers.

Baron Ivan.—What are you blethering about?

Tcinderella.—Don't you know?

Baron Ivan.—I don't.

Tcinderella.—Can't you guess?

Baron Ivan.—I can—not.

Tcinderella.—Perhaps I am unreasonable to expect poor old papakin to understand a young girl. Papa, misha papa—I want to go to the Prince's ball. May I?

Baron Ivan.—Impossible. The old witch—I mean your dear mamma—would not hear of it.

(At this moment the jingling of gilt spurs is heard on the floor above; the noise gets louder and louder, and loudest of all when the kitchen door opens and reveals Brigadier-General Nicholay Howitzeroff. He is dressed in the full uniform of a General of Staff. He wears trousers presented to him and commanded to wear by the Little Father, with gold braid, both inside and outside. He is old, yet there are still traces of the gentleman about him. He wears decorations on his breast that few have seen and less have heard of, including the Trussed Eagle of Turkey, the Fatted Calf of Jerusalem, and the Triple Star of Hennessy. He walks sideways down the stairs to save his spurs, and hastens to his old friend the Baron, kisses him on both cheeks, and spits out the unnecessary hairs.)

Brigadier-General Nicholay Howitzeroff.—Ah, my old friend. I have just been appointed aide-de-camp to the Prince, and hearing to-day that you lived in this part of the country I hastened to pay my respects. Why, it

must be thirty years since I saw you last—you had only a moustache then—God, how your beard has grown.

Baron Ivan.—Yes, yes, but keep off it.

B.-G. Nicholay.—What?

Baron Ivan.—My beard—you're standing on it.

B.-G. Nicholay.—Sorry. (Lifts his feet.)

(*Curtain.*)

ACT II.

The Baron's demesne. At the back of the stage is a high wall, but not so high as to obscure a notice board with the words: "Trespassers prosecuted. All serfs shot." The back of the board faces the audience.

Regardless of this notice, a pic-nic party has settled down to lunch in the foreground.

Kleptomania (Marfa's maid) and a deaf and almost dumb waiter are attending the party by filling champagne glasses, licking plates, etc.

The fashionable crush is composed of Prince Tcharmink, Capt. Itchikoo, Lieut. Ofaltoff, and two (more or less) ladies—Marfa Stepnivitch (a Petersburg dancer) and Nastyanna (a beautiful but bitter-tongued society lady from Moscow).

It is a frivolous party, but the stamp of good breeding is there too, safe.

Prince Tcharmink.—Itchikoo! After you with that cucumber. (Itchikoo throws half of a cucumber to the Prince, who catches it neatly in his well-manicured teeth.)

Andrey Ofaltoff (posing in a dandified manner, with his long silken side-whiskers thrown carelessly over his shoulders).—Messieurs et mesdames, this is rather an exceptional occasion, so let us drink to its repetition. (Raises his glass.)

Marfa.—Pourquoi "exceptional," mon petit?

Andrey Ofaltoff.—This is the first time that we five have picknicked together under the shadow of a "trespassers prosecuted" board.

(They all laugh and clap their hands in sheer delight—it is a tremendously jolly party.)

Prince Tcharmink.—I wonder what bounder owns this earth. (Spoken in English.)

Fyodov Itchikoo.—What is a "bounder" in Russian, Prince?—All right, yes, is it not? (also in English) No?

Marfa Stepnivitch.—Fie, fie, gentlemen, you must not parlez your bon mots with double entendres in the presence of ladies who do not speak English. (As she speaks, she coquettishly shows one of her elastic-sided boots, exposing a neat ankle,* well up to the third vertebra.)

* The author here proves himself prophetic, as ladies' ankles were not seen until 1884 (ten years afterwards), when "dress improvers" were first worn.

Prince Tcharmink.—Apropos of that remark, mesdames, who do you think I saw at Baden last Sunday?

Marfa—Quoi?

Nastyanna—Qui?

Fyodov.—Le connaissez pas.

Andrey.—Ask me une autre.

Prince Tcharmink.—No less a person than young Bombanya.

Marfa Stepnivitch.—Not the Nihilist?

Prince Tcharmink.—Le même chose.

(Tcinderella is gathering faggots close by, unobserved by the revellers.

She drops her bundle at the mention of "Bombanya" with a rattle on the ground. The party stops eating—there is a silence profound.)

Prince Tcharmink (in ecstasy).—What a divine creature! What grace—quelle embonpoint!

Andrey Ofaltoff.—Quelle jambons!

Prince Tcharmink (to Andrey with venom).—Fermez votre mouth, imbecile! (To Tcinderella): Ma petite (the errors in French and English are that of the characters, not the author or translator), although dressed in this garb you cannot disguise the fact that you are a queen.

Tcinderella.—Alas, no, sir, I am only a baron's daughter.

Prince Tcharmink.—Quelle domage, but no matter. I'm giving a hop up at the palace next Friday—would you like to go? I am the Prince.

Tcinderella.—I would be delighted, your Excellency, but I have no clothes.

Prince Tcharmink (bowing).—You would be all the more charming attired thus. (Kisses her hand.)

(The party, including Kleptomania, giggle. The Prince sees he has made a faut pas and blushes deep into his raven whiskers. Tcinderella, embarrassed, turns and flies up-stage; the Prince catches her by the chignon and wheels her round.)

Prince Tcharmink.—I will not be refused—you *must* come to the ball on Friday night. I will send a carriage and powdered footmen, also, maybe, a coachman.

Tcinderella.—But my dress?

Prince Tcharmink.—I will see to that. Actresses come often to the palace to see me. Many of them leave gorgeous dresses behind them. I will send you a van load to choose from.

Tcinderella.—But I have no invitation card.

Prince Tcharmink.—Here is a pass—I have plenty of them—do not thank me. This will admit a friend also, and is valid for refreshments. Au revoir.

(Curtain.)

ACT III.

The Prince's Ball.

The scene is laid in the luxurious lean-to conservatory of the palace.

There is a wall at the back, against which are fastened solid Siberian marble columns.

In the centre of this wall is a huge double door which swings open automatically with the breath of the guests as they come in from the refreshment room.

To the right a glimpse of the ballroom can be caught. To the left is a door leading to a room which will be described time enough.

The floor of the conservatory has a neat design of encaustic tiles which intensifies the jingle of the officers' spurs.

Small but sturdy tables hold their own on the stage. The ugliness of the mahogany chairs are half hidden by chic antimacassars.

The apartments reek with the odour of wine, spirits, cigars, and Neopolitan ices.

Waiters are rushing to and fro, from pillar to post.

When the curtain rises some high-class Russian couples are discovered flirting amongst the palm trees, and some are not discovered at all.

A German orchestra is playing polkas, mazurkas, apolonaises, and other Russian dance music.

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff (appears at the ballroom door; he is flushed with wine, but is evidently looking for more. He has a lady clinging to each arm and two other ladies follow close behind. After seeing them comfortably seated he looks round the room for a waiter; his attention is drawn to young Katalepsky, who is leaning against a vine tree, licking salt out of a silver case).—Hillo, Mihail! How did you get in?

Katalepsky.—Ha, ha—you are inclined to be funny this evening, General; but that is an English joke—n'est pas?

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff.—No, it's Irish. I heard it in a theatre in Dublin.

Katalepsky.—The Irish are very witty. I have read Swift and Lever and Lover and Carleton and Burns—

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff.—Bookworm! But you are evading my question. How did you get in?

Marfa Stepnivitch (who is reclining on a bandy-legged but otherwise pure Louis XV. sofa).—Don't answer him, Katapultskin. Come and sit on my knee. I'm tired of Ofaltoff—he bores me; besides, he's weighty—I've got "pins and needles."

(Katalepsky, being a poet, is shy, and so is content with sitting at Marfa's feet.)

Katalepsky (with adoring eyes).—Thank you so much for this favour, Marfa Stepnivitch.

Marfa.—How cold and formal we are to-night.

Katalepsky.—How ! O, I understand. May I call you “ *Marfa* ” ?

Marfa.—You may go farther and call me “ *Marfamishka*.” (A form of her name only used by passionate lovers. She is obviously a very wicked woman.—*Translator*.)

Katalepsky.—*Marfamishka*, I adore you. Last week I wrote a sonnet to you and got my friend Piccolovitch to set it to music.

Marfa.—How sweet of you.

Katalepsky.—I sent it to the “ *Moscow Accordeon*.”

Marfa.—And did they accept it ?

Katalepsky.—O, no. I didn’t expect they would. It was above their heads ; but I have got it with me. Shall I read it or sing it ?

Marfa (covering a yawn with her large feather fan).—For the love of the saints, don’t do either. (Rises to her dainty feet and takes Ofaltoff’s arm.) Come away, Andrey Ofaltoff, the atmosphere of this conservatory is stifling—take me to the refreshment bar. (She leaves the room on Ofaltoff’s arm without looking back.)

Nastyanna (to the Brig.-Gen.)—General, have you forgotten the four thirsty throats you brought in here ?

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff.—Pardon, mesdames. (Whistles at a waiter with two fingers in his mouth.) Hi ! Garcon !

Nastyanna (as a red-haired waiter approaches).—No, no, General—not that waiter. His hair is an impossible shade.

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff.—There’s a bald-headed fellow over there—will he do ?

Nastyanna (poking the General in the ribs with the butt end of her fan).—O, General, you are a tease—your jokes will be the death of me.

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff (calling a waiter from a long distance).—Hi, Pushkin ! (A waiter who resembles Pushkin approaches.) A magnum of champagne and four shandies for the ladies. Vite !

Bombanya (appears at the ballroom with Tcinderella on his arm. The band stops playing to emphasize the tenseness of the situation).—Tcinderella, my love, my life, I could dance with you to eternity.

Tcinderella.—But I have promised another dance to the Prince.

Bombanya.—The Prince ! and you a Nihilist—shame ! I forbid it.

Tcinderella.—Trust me, *Bombanya* (with a meaning expression); I have *raison*.

Bombanya.—Bah ! As I was saying—O, my love, how I enjoyed that last apolonaise. (The apolonaise is a strenuous national dance which can only be accomplished in top-boots.—*Translator*.) The blood coursed through my veins like wine of the rarest vintage. My child, so long as we dance the apolonaise there will always be a future for Russia.

Tcinderella.—I know, *Bombanya*. It is a thrilling dance, and I know as patriots it is our duty—but—but—

Bombanya.—But what, my darling ?

Tcinderella.—It makes me perspire so.

Bombanya.—Perspire—I would sweat, aye, sweat blood for Russia ; but where is the bomb ? I hope you have not forgotten it.

Tcinderella.—How could I ?—that is what brought me here. (Produces a small home-made bomb.)

Bombanya.—Give it to me.

(Two military-looking men appear at the centre door—they are not in uniform. A hush comes over the room—a samovar could be heard dropping.)

Bombanya.—We are discovered.

Tcinderella.—How do you mean ?

Bombanya.—Police—detectives.

Tcinderella.—How do you know ?

Bombanya.—Naive creature—look at their feet ; besides, I know them personally. Vite ! Give me the bomb.

Tcinderella.—Pourquoi ?

Bombanya.—Do not bandy French words with me at such a moment. Vite !

(She hands him the bomb, and he slinks off.)

First Secret Policeman (approaches *Tcinderella*).—*Tcinderella Ivanitch Vodkavitch*, I arrest you in the name of the Czar.

Tcinderella.—What does this mean ?

First Secret Policeman.—You are known to be a Nihilist and are suspected of manufacturing bombs in your father's kitchen. We also have proof that at the present moment you have an infernal machine in your possession.

Tcinderella.—You lie !

Second Secret Policeman (whispers).—Cherchez la femme.

Tcinderella.—Would you dare ? You call yourself a man—shame. I will die by my own hand ere I submit to such a humiliation. (She produces a bottle of Hirstel's Cough Cure.)

(The two policemen close in on her and carry her out of the room struggling ; crêpe hair in great hunks covers the stage as she plucks it from her captors' faces. In the struggle one of her top-boots falls on the stage.)

Prince Tcharmink (enters hurriedly from the ballroom).—Where is *Tcinderella* ?

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff.—Your Highness, at this moment the lady is probably on her way to Siberia.

Prince Tcharmink.—To Siberia ? Why ?

Brig.-Gen. Howitzeroff.—Ah, now you are enquiring (spoken in English).

Prince Tcharmink.—I love her. I proclaim my love before you all. I would die for her. I must follow her.

Nastyanna (scornfully).—She is a Nihilist.

Prince Tcharmink.—I don't give a d—n if she is a Baptist—I'll marry her. (He trips over her top-boot.) Ah, it is her boot. (Kisses it)

without a quiver and rushes to the door to the left.) I'll follow her to the Mines—to the Mines ! (Bangs the door.)

Waiter (who resembles Pushkin).—Pardon, your Highness—not *that* way—that is the ladies' cloak-room.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT IV.

Ten years are supposed to have elapsed since the previous act.

The action of the play takes place in one of the less frequented parts of Siberia.

Pine trees laden with snow bend to the pressure of an electric fan (concealed behind a rock).

Although the whole scene is clothed in white, no snow is falling. The heavens apparently have done their worst.

A wretched, motley crowd of prisoners trudge painfully on a moving platform. The scenery passes slowly in the opposite direction.

The unfortunate creatures, both men and women, are highly strung on an endless chain.

Non-commissioned, but, nevertheless, brutal, officers occasionally use the knout (the Russian "cat.")

Groans proceed from the men and shrill screams from the women.

(As this scene has a heart-rending effect on a Russian audience, the author has purposely cut it short.—*Translator.*)

After five minutes of this march the machinery stops suddenly by command of a non-com., and the prisoners step off the moving platform and sit in the centre of the stage.

A second order is given, and the prisoners produce black bread from their wallets.

At the third command they start to eat their frugal meal and wash it down with snow.

A waggon, drawn by Siberian oxen, appears from the right of the stage and stops at the left. (The oxen had better go on home.)

Four batmen jump out of the waggon and place a table and chairs on the stage.

A table-cloth is laid, on which are placed dishes of roast turkey, steak and kidney pie, ham, eels, cucumbers, tarts, chip potatoes, kvas, vodka, champagne, tea, coffee, and liqueurs.

The non-coms. sit down, waited on by their batmen, and chew their viands with real Russian relish.

The male prisoners chew their beards in sheer chagrin.

Tcinderella stands in the centre of the group of prisoners. She has a hungry look in her eyes—no wonder, poor girl.

Adequate time should be allowed to give the four non-commissioned officers and their batmen time to get not only drunk, but sound asleep.

Then the sleigh-bells are heard faintly in the distance (to the right of the stage).

The noise of the bells gets louder and louder, but no cocoa-nuts should be used, as snow is on the ground.

The driver pulls up his horses as soon as Prince Tcharmink is well in view of the audience.

Prince Tcharmink.—At last, at last! (He pulls out his half-hunter watch.) It is now just ten years since I first got on your track. (He clears his throat.) Slavs, Poles, Jews, Tartars, as doubtless many of you are aware, I gave a ball on St. Michail's eve ten years ago. On that occasion I danced with the most beautiful creature I had ever beheld. I fell madly, passionately, in love with her, but, unfortunately, just at the moment I was about to declare my devotion and to offer her my hand in marriage, she was snatched by an inexorable fate and carried off to Siberia. For years I have followed in her track, but time, the great healer, has caused me to forget her name. However, I have one of her boots. By this boot (holding it aloft) I hope to identify her. She may not remember me. Our acquaintance was of short duration. I can only hope that she was flabbergasted by my gorgeous uniform—no more. Would some gentleman kindly pass this boot round the ladies—at least those under forty years of age. (The boot is passed round and returned.) Ah, she must be dead. (He throws the boot on the ground and is about to order his driver to reverse the horses when Tcinderella raises her arm.)

Prince Tcharmink.—What is it, unhappy woman?

Tcinderella.—Prince Tcharmink.

Prince.—Ah, she knows my name (aside to the horses).

Tcinderella.—That is my boot.

Prince.—Impossible. Why did you not put it on?

Tcinderella.—Because it would not go on.

Prince.—Why?

Tcinderella.—Why do you ask such a question? If you had tramped through Russia for ten years, what size, think you, would your foot have been by now?

Prince.—I never thought of that—I have been driving—but what is your name?

Tcinderella.—My name is Tcinderella.

Prince.—Ah, the missing link—I mean name—Tcinderella. Tcinderella, my love, my life—you are free. Come back with me—back to Little Russia. Share with me my humble palace.

Tcinderella.—Alas, it cannot be. I am betrothed.

Prince.—Who is the scoundrel?

Tcinderella.—Call him not scoundrel, even if he differs from you in politics.

Prince.—But who is he?

Tcinderella.—You would not know him; he is, or was, a humble student in Moscow—his name is Bombanya.

Prince.—The police spy?

Tcinderella.—What do you say?

Prince.—Would you know his handwriting?

Tcinderella.—I would know it in he—.

Prince.—S—s—sh! Look at this. (Produces a document from his hip-pocket.) Read that. (She reads, screams, and falls into the Prince's arms.) What did I tell you?—a police spy—he gave you away—sold you for a thousand roubles.

Tcinderella.—Such a paltry sum.

Prince.—Rotten. Hold that boot for a minute; I've got a lovely ermine opera cloak for you. (He puts the cloak round her and pulls her over to his sleigh. The remainder of the prisoners, being on the same chain, are pulled after her. He looks round.) This will never do. (To his servant): Get out the tool kit and liberate this lady. (The servant, who is an ex-gaol-breaker, promptly sets *Tcinderella* free.)

The Prince.—Now, my darling, you are free. I will drive myself. I will drive like a fury—back, back to Russia. It has taken ten years to reach this spot, but by G—d I'll bring you home in half the time.

Tcinderella.—But the boot—it is no use to me now. (Holds it up.) What shall I do with it?

The Prince (whipping up the horses).—Gee-up. Give it to *Bombanya*. (Winks.)

Tcinderella.—You are right, my Prince. I will give *Bombanya* the boot.

(*Slow (but sure) curtain.*)



THE OUTLANDISH LOVERS.

From an Oil Painting

By

JOHN KEATING, R.H.A.

A Master Stage Mechanist of the Old Noblesse.

By W. J. LAWRENCE.

SMALL communities of men, like colonies of rats, have a horror of variation from type. In the seventeenth century there was danger in being a wizard, if only in the mild form of wizard of the theatre. That operatic wonder-worker, Giacomo Torelli, found it so while actively pursuing his profession as scene-painter and contriver of amazing stage effects at Venice. Anything may happen where gods and goddesses are the protagonists, and the mythological scheme of early opera lent itself admirably to the exploitation of Torelli's massive conjuring tricks. The climax of his inventive genius came when he contrived a method of transforming an entire scene in the twinkling of an eye. Venice, nothing if not superstitious, had for some time entertained suspicions of his dealings with the devil, and this, his master-effort in stage mechanics, fully confirmed them. Accordingly, the black rats determined that this mysterious white rat should be extirpated. But no stage miracle that Torelli ever accomplished was quite equal to the miracle he accomplished in escaping from his enemies. Set upon one dark night in a narrow street by a number of masked assassins, he managed by skilful sword-play to defeat his assailants and got off with no more serious injury than a wound in the hand.

With his ill-reputation growing apace and pursuing him like a shadow, Torelli retired to Parma, whither respite unexpectedly came. Urged by his desire to establish opera in France, Cardinal Mazarin made him an offer to go to Paris, which he very thankfully accepted. His first work there was executed for a revival of Strozzi's old Venetian opera, *La Finta Pazza*, given privately in the Petit Bourbon in 1645. Though the theme was the age-long story of Achilles in petticoats, he never hesitated about giving a contemporary slice of Paris in one of the scenes. No one worried over stage anachronisms in those days, and the French court took the error in taste as a delicate compliment. From swords Torelli now found himself assailed by sonnets. Remaining in France for fifteen years, he was instrumental in creating permanent reform in French stage mounting.

Meanwhile, however, native opera, which Mazarin had so ardently desired to establish, was painfully slow in emerging. Composers were lacking, and poets looked upon the office of opera-librettist with contempt. The native professional vocal art had to be created, and there were ugly barriers in the way. Of voices there was a sufficiency, but those who possessed them were revolted by the prospect of the loss of civil rights

and the denial of Christian burial, which were the punishments inflicted upon those who dared to go upon the stage. In the beginning this led to a clumsy compromise. When the *Andromedé* of Pierre Corneille was given at the Petit Bourbon in 1650, the singers were hidden on the sides in latticed boxes and had silent doubles on the stage who suited the action to the song.

In the remote days of the old open-air *mystères*, ages before the advent of opera, stage tricks were technically known among the old artificers as *secrets* : and secrets they long remained, seeing how jealously the great Italian machinists guarded the working of their magical surprises. Torelli was no exception to the rule, but it would seem that he was caught napping by a certain Curious Impertinent who, owing to his exalted station, no theatrical inventor would have dreamt of considering a possible rival. The notability whom the brilliant Italian thus entertained without suspicion of his motives was none other than Alexandre de Rieux, Marquis de Sourdéac, a walking paradox in whose veins ran the bluest blood in France. Destined to take a prominent part in the establishment of French opera, this extraordinary aristocrat was so ill a believer in the precept, “Noblesse oblige,” that he shocked all the existing concepts of seignioral propriety by the vulgarity of his demeanour. In an age when a marquis was popularly supposed to sleep in his coronet, and to extort hero-worship from his own valet, he chose to go about Paris unattended, performing for himself the meanest offices. Godless, *sans peur* but not *sans reproche*, he gave no thought to the responsibilities of his position, and only availed himself of his *droits de seigneur* so far as they ministered to his appetites or absolved him from the consequences of his thoroughgoing rascality. His life was positively devoid of any redeeming feature. In Normandy, where he had an estate, he is said to have originated a novel kind of stag hunt in which some unhappy, suddenly-unearthed peasant was forced into becoming proxy for the stag.

It was precisely at the time Torelli bade farewell to France and went into retirement in his native city of Fano that the Marquis de Sourdéac elected to spring a fresh astonishment on the fashionable world. Though it had long been known to his intimates that he had a liking for mechanics, and was, indeed, a competent locksmith, nobody suspected that he had a passion for the theatre : consequently his *début* as stage mechanist came upon his set like thunder from a clear sky.

Sourdéac chose a happy moment for the exploitation of his inventive genius. The better to celebrate the impending nuptials of Louis XIV., he commissioned Corneille to write for him, for private performance, a *tragedie à machine*, after the manner of his *Andromedé*, that is to say, a composite piece, half tragedy, half opera. But the two were virtually collaborators, since the poet had to contrive plausible situations in order to utilise to best advantage divers new scenic effects which the marquis had excogitated in rivalry with Torelli. As it happened the young King was unable to be present when *La Toison D'Or*, the piece in question,

was performed at Neufbourg, Sourdéac's chateau in Normandy, before five hundred guests in the autumn of 1660. But so glowing were the accounts of the spectacular wonders poured into his ears that he signified his desire that it should be repeated in Paris. The result was that Corneille's hotch-potch was transferred, lock, stock, and barrel, to the Théâtre du Marais and performed there by the regular players with remarkable success in February, 1661. At once the cry went up, "Torelli is outdone." Those were the days when aerial flights of divinities were all the rage in opera, and Sourdéac, despite his inexperience, had contrived to supersede the conventional Italian method of representing them. The best that Torelli and his congeners could do was to lower the god in his car to the stage or convey the cloud-borne goddess across the scene from side to side, but Sourdéac astonished all Paris by making a cupid fly from the back forwards, descending gently as it flew. No less novel was the effect in the fifth act where Medea on her dragon was attacked in mid-air by Zethis and Calais, all three singing or declaiming as they fought.

Shortly afterwards, in order to continue his experiments, Sourdéac constructed a small private theatre in his mansion in the Rue Garancière, where, from time to time, he gave performances to his friends. It was not to be expected that a hobby of this order would escape the attentions of the satirist, and, in due course, Sourdéac's peculiarity was made the subject of an amusing play, *Le Comedian-Poëte*, by Antoine Montfleury, much appreciated when brought out at the theatre in the rue Mazarine in November, 1673.

But we are anticipating. In 1669, the Grand Monarch had issued letters patent to Pierre Perrin authorising him to establish an Academy of French Opera and to erect an opera-house for public performances. Sourdéac at once associated himself with the new venture, entering into articles whereby he was constituted co-director and chief machinist of the Academy. A site in the rue de Vaugirard was soon afterwards selected for the building of the new opera-house, but there was considerable delay in its erection owing to the fact that Sourdéac's scheme of elaborate under machinery necessitated a laborious excavation of twenty feet or so below the surface. Meanwhile rehearsals of *Pomone*, the new opera with which the Academy of Music was to be inaugurated, were carried on at the marquis's country seat at Sèvres, and the first performance of the work actually given there. Finally, in March, 1671—thirty-four years after Italy had pioneered the way with the Teatro Cassiano of Venice, and exactly another thirty-four before England followed suit—France was able to boast possession of her first opera-house. At once—the people lost their heads over the new delight and were long in finding them. It mattered not a whit that the prices of admission ran absurdly high, that a pit ticket, for example, cost ten livres, or more than thirty francs of the present currency. It may be, too, that the fact that *Pomone* was disfigured by a variety of stage tricks savouring of popular harlequinade

served to endear it the more to the masses. At any rate, whatever the fascination, the one opera drew crowded houses for eight months on end, and was the means of creating a nightly turbulency in the neighbourhood which the police found difficulty in subduing. Seemingly everything was going as merrily as marriage bells: the profits of the partners over their first venture amounted to 120,000 livres. But it was not long before there was a rift in the lute. Perrin, as thriftless as he was poor, had borrowed considerable sums of money from his partner before their enterprise had got well under way, and he had neither the inclination nor the money to discharge his obligations when Sourdéac demanded an accounting. A bitter quarrel ensued, ending in the discomfiture of Perrin: he was barred out of the theatre. Sourdéac, however, had gained nothing more than a pyrrhic victory: the strife proved internecine. A second opera, *Des Peines et des Plaisirs de L'Amour*, was produced, the book written by Gabriel Gilbert, but Ichabod was already written over the doors of the new Academy of Music, and they closed in April, 1672, never to re-open again save to give housing to the Italian comedians.

Brief as was the career of the first French opera-house, it was marked by bitter law-suits, in most of which the Marquis de Sourdéac and his masquerading ally, Laurent Bersac, alias Champeron, figure as the defendants. There still reposes in the archives of the Comédie Française a grave, if quaintly composed, indictment of these two worthies, at once revelatory of their whole-souled scoundrelism and of the appalling state of life behind the scenes at the *Opéra* in the days of the Grand Monarch. M. de Sourdéac, we read, is a man of the first blood in the kingdom, head of the younger, or Brittany, branch of the noble house of Rieux. Yet of all people he is the vulgarest both in manners and conduct. He has never been employed in the army nor attended at court, but during the civil wars he took advantage of the prevailing confusion to turn pirate and ravage the coast of Brittany. It is true he is a good carpenter and a skilled artificer in iron and knows something about theatrical machinery; but, on the other hand, he is a suspected criminal, believed to have been engaged for long in making counterfeit coin at Neufbourg, and charged with a dozen murders. All the second-hand clothes dealers in Paris can testify that he has been in business as a pawnbroker, lending out money on pledges at an interest of two sous per livre per month. He is disorderly in his habits, running about the streets like an escaped lunatic, alone and without equipage. He makes his solitary way to the market place and goes home with his purchases of game or codfish stuffed under his coat. Ever swearing and blaspheming, he lives in perpetual discord with his wife, children, and relatives. He haunts taverns and places of infamy, keeping mistresses in his house under the noses of his wife and daughters; nay, more, he has a couple ensconced in the opera-house.

But one must adopt Sterne's method and hang out lights. The rest of this musty old tirade can only be summarised. The Sieur de Sourdéac, we are further told, keeps the opera-house in a perpetual state of upset.

From him the female singers, the musicians, and the stage carpenters receive nothing but curses and blows. He fulfils many menial offices unbecoming to his station, standing at the door bareheaded and uncloaked to receive money, appearing upon the stage in nothing but his shirt, whistling, to change the scenes, not to speak of a thousand and one other aberrations which make him a common laughing stock. Salaries are in abeyance, and the articled pupils of the Academy are not being taught. Finally, "*Tous les machinistes ont déserté, ne pouvant souffrir les blasphèmes, injures et excès continuels du sieur de Sourdéac.*" Little wonder that the grandiose project came to an untimely end.

History is silent as to this uncanny nobleman's subsequent doings. All we know for certain is that he contrived to evade the logical consequences of his crimes. Alexandre de Rieux, Marquis de Sourdéac, Seigneur de Neufbourg, sometime pirate, assassin, coiner, pawnbroker and theatrical mechanist, died quietly in his bed, on May 7th, 1695. A proof that if all the world's a stage, the melodramas played in it sometimes fail to end melodramatically.

Lilith.

By ELLA YOUNG.

DAY-LONG he had wandered over the mountain, at times knee-deep in autumn-rusted heather. He had found a path-way through the treacherous greenness of two morasses. He had loitered, solitary, by the black tarn. And now with a strange suddenness he had come upon the wood—a wood of gnarled and twisted thorn, red-fruited on boughs of silver and ashen-gray. It had an air of infinitude, of depths sliding into depths, branch-netted. A tall stag moved in the shadows, heavy-antlered, fantastic, ghost-like : with him were hinds and spotted fawns, milky-white, dappled with amber. The fine grass was coloured like a flawless emerald. He did not dare to set a sacrilegious foot upon that grass : he leaned against a stone that thrust itself lichen-damasked from the heather, and waited what might happen.

The sky was smoky-purple, low-lying as though desirous of earth. The wind that scarcely stirred a tree-top was warm and languorous. He was not surprised when she came out of the wood. A green robe clung about her, her face was pale, her eyes were of a golden colour, her heavy hair was purple-black. He knew her for Morgan le Fay.

“I am Lilith,” she said; “you have called me many times, but it is only now that I have power to come.”

He did not move from the stone : he did not lean towards her, though she stood close.

“Yes,” he said, “I have called you many times : I have called you all my life.”

“Put your hands in mine,” said Lilith. “I will kiss your eye-lids : you will forget the earth.”

“I might forget the kindly earth, but not the sea ; its sinuous waves ; the lure of ships adventuring ; the sound of it ; the still translucent depths ; I would be the sea—hungered for change !”

“The Serpent of Wisdom has bitten you,” said Lilith. “Why were you not too wise to call on me ?”

“Who that has life can be too wise for that. Petal of the Wind-flower, Redness of the Autumn Leaf, Voice of the Wind, who can forsake you ? Feathered Plume of Falling Water, who can hold you ?”

“Merlin that had garnered such store of wisdom found peace with me,” said Lilith ; “he has long since forgotten the sea-spume.”

“Alas, he is but a galleon sunken in it too deep for palest glimmer of the sun—drowned away from you, beyond the stir of water-weed, beyond the proud disquiet of the dawn. In vain you stain your

sandals with vermillion : in vain you loose the tresses of your hair : in vain for Merlin, O Lilith of a thousand wiles—out-wiled at last ! ”

Half-reluctant, Lilith turned from him ; she drew the greenness of her mantle about her head, her face gleamed whitely in it : she looked sideways back in saying to him :

“ So thick the leaves grow on your Tree of Knowledge that it shuts out the light : yet winter strips it. The stone that keeps its wisdom hidden outlasts the fruited bough.”

He would have spoken, but her eyes held him silent. The trees moved to her, and with a sudden gesture throwing wide her hood, she loosed the tresses of her hair. They tangled in the gnarled and twisted branches. They were those branches, and she herself the mystery of the wood—and of all woods and shadowy silent places and moving waters.

She was gone. There was no longer any glamour in the wood : the wind blew coldly out of an ashen sky.

Book Reviews.

ITALIAN INFLUENCE ON EUROPEAN DRAMA.

“THE COMMEDIA DELL’ARTE AND THE ROMAN COMEDY.”
By Walter Starkie, M.A. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Vol. XXXVI., Section C., No. 18. Price 9d.

It is remarkable, though by no means surprising, that Italy in the period of the Renaissance so magnificently cherished the arts and yet produced no great drama. The reason is not far to seek. The prime essential for the creation of great drama is community of Thespian worship. Patrician and plebeian must kneel side by side if the divine spirit is to descend. One finds them so kneeling in Periclean Athens and in Shakespeare’s England. The ephemeral play is the play lacking that great antiseptic, the one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin ; and that mysterious, baffling element can only be inspired by a public sufficiently unified and sufficiently advanced to consider the theatre (in Oscar Wilde’s phrase) “the meeting-place of Art and Life.”

The drama of the Renaissance was cramped by the feudal spirit. Italy had no public theatres before 1560, and the few that then began sporadically to emerge were class conscious rather than communal. Consequently at that critical period when the foundations of Italian drama were being laid, sharp division sprang up between the drama of the masses and the drama of the classes. The conditions of performance reflected the diversity of form, since the one was given on open-air stages at street corners, and the other in the lavishly-adorned halls of the nobility. The popular drama, known as the *Commedia dell’arte*, reveals the ineptitude of that scornful kind of latter-day critic who appraises drama purely by its literary content, oblivious of how it acts. Not having been written, it cannot be considered literature : and yet it resolutely refuses to be ignored. Between the *Commedia dell’arte* and the moving picture drama there is close analogy inasmuch as a scenario is the basis of both, and both come and go and leave no trace. What will the world know a century hence of the particular humours of *Felix the Cat* ?

But it does not suffice to say that in being improvised on a given plot, the *Commedia dell’arte* was a triumph of histrionic, and not at all of literary genius. Much, too, as it depended on riotous buffoonery for its appeal, it had other marked differentiations. Though the plot perpetually changed, the characters never varied. All wore masks, and each was a typification in dress and dialect of some Italian town or province. Bergamo has the right to believe that the vilification of to-day is the distinction of to-morrow, so far has she been immortalised by the blunderer called *Arlecchino*, fastened upon by popular acclaim as her fitting representative.

As for the drama of the classes, the *Commedia erudita* as it was called, one requires some of the misdirected zeal of the aforesaid literary critic to pump up any enthusiasm about a lifeless imitation of Plautus and Terence so icily regular in form and so splendidly null in results. Like the *Commedia dell’arte*, it is more remarkable for what it inspired outside Italy than for what it achieved within its borders. Indigenously, however, the popular drama had much the best of it, since it culminated in Goldoni and Gozzi, whereas academic comedy simply led into a blind alley.

This vivid contrast between the drama of the masses and the drama of the classes is slightly touched upon by Professor Starkie in a paper chiefly concerned with the origin, progress, and influence of the *Commedia dell'arte*, and informed by ripe and gracefully-worn erudition. Not since the remote days of Joseph Cooper Walker, author of an "Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy" and cognate works, has Ireland boasted a scholar so capable of threading the mazes of early Italian drama.

The curious thing is that while the unwritten Italian comedy exerted for long a recurrent influence on Occidental dramaturgy, and even evoked new forms of entertainment, the influence of the written and published Italian comedy, though not precisely negligible, was fleeting. For over a century the *Commedia dell'arte* players overran Europe, inspiring in various manners Moliere, Marivaux, and Lesage, and yielding to Shakespeare his familiar figure of "the lean and slippered pantaloon." Professor Starkie is silent regarding the numerous visits of the Italian comedians to England, but it is noteworthy that Ravenscroft, Mountford, and Mrs. Behn, in acclimatizing Harlequin and his merry companions, paved the way for the approach of Christmas pantomime.

The distinguishing note of scholastic drama is its aridity. Permanence is denied to it because, as the Chinese proverb says, it is only on the Agreeable that old Father Time breaks his teeth. But the historian would be neglectful of his duties who should fail to point out that the neo-classic comedy, in inspiring English academic drama, *i.e.*, the individual drama of the Universities and the Inns of Court, was not without its measure of influence on the physical disposition of the first London theatres, and, through them, on Elizabethan dramaturgy. The neo-Plautine conventions are to be traced in *Ralph Roister Doister*, the first English comedy, as well as in some later theatre-pieces such as Llyl's *Mother Bombie*. Roman comedy was distinctively a comedy of the open. All the action passed in a public square or street ; and in the academic comedy of the Renaissance, as in its English University ectypes, an illusive background of domestic buildings was afforded. Variety was lent to the traffic of the scene by the use of windows, a resource which in some degree mitigated the awkwardness of not being able to show interiors. These window effects, traceable in *The Supposes* of Gascoigne, a comedy taken from Ariosto and performed at Gray's Inn in 1566, were subsequently transferred to popular drama in the inn-yard phase, with the result that when the first London theatres came to be built, practicable casements for use in serenade and other scenes came to be provided in the tiring-house front, otherwise the permanent background of the stage. With the frequent resort to and variety of employment of these windows in the Elizabethan drama most students are familiar, but none hitherto have been aware of their source. Now that the matter has been broached, Professor Starkie might do the cause of knowledge still further service by devoting a second paper to full consideration of this virgin subject, together with some inquiry into the visits of the *Commedia dell'arte* players to England.

W. J. LAWRENCE.

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF CHILDREN'S COSTUME FROM THE
GREAT MASTERS. By Percy MacQuoid. The Medici Society.

Price 15s.

A scholarly and attractive work of sartorial research. Mr. MacQuoid has a wide knowledge of his subject that enables him to write of it in the cataloguer's manner of selective brevity. With authoritative ease he picks and chooses amid the wealth of garments and trinkets of the children of four centuries.

From time to time he gives us a little biographical detail, a random anecdote, or a scrap of contemporary description, but he refrains from boring us with anything systematic or obviously relevant. For the most part the nature of his subject makes mere display the most pertinent comment. Such lists as the following ought to be sweet symphonies to any child who contemplates dressing up : "A Ryding Cote of Green Satteen, Doblets . . . and upper hose . . . of crymsen satteen embroidered with Venice golde and lined with sarcenet, . . . a hole furre of pampilion and black bogye . . . velvet shoes, slippers, boots, and buskins . . . great ruffes . . . pleted and crested ful curiously God wot!"

And so forth—"almost singing themselves they run."

The Medici plates with their characteristic tone of rubicund health, which always arouses in one a slight suspicion that the old masters have been cleaned up a little with the nursery soap, look appropriate and delightful in this volume, primarily intended for a children's picture book.

"The CRITERION": A Quarterly Review. July, 1924.

The twelve features of the current number of "The Criterion" succeed in producing the effect of inward cohesion, which is apparently one of the ideals of this quarterly—an ideal rare enough in periodical literature to-day. Notable to the poetic world, and of pre-eminent interest in Ireland, is the new play by W. B. Yeats. A terrible little "play for dancers," revealing afresh the poet's unexcelled power of stirring transcendental emotion by an alchemy whereby we see our sorrow and sweat transmuted to gold in a dark furnace. Yet, strangely enough, one seems to be aware, for the first time in this play, of a sense that the daemon is irked by the grotesque mask. It is as though "the sacred moon overhead" had "taken a new phase" and begun suddenly to burn away the gilded paper hitherto fused with the inevitable life within, which now seems to be breaking impatiently through, making of the mask a mere repressive shell.

The translated fragment, "The Death of Albertine," is a good example of Proust's strange ensorcelled mastery. A spell falls on us from the opening words. Within us something awakens; something falls asleep. Gradually, imperceptibly, drowsily, keenly, we become bemused and endowed with new powers.

Virginia Woolf contributes an essay on Character in Fiction, setting forth with the graciousness and sympathy, that are marked qualities in all her work, some results of her creative investigations.

THE DARK SWAN. By Ernest Pascal. Brentano's, Limited. 7s. 6d.

When stung to antagonism, Mr. Pascal attains to some subtlety of sex psychology. His insight is deepened by hostile emotion. Only when he resents a character does he quite grasp its reality. Where his sympathies are engaged he becomes insensitive and sentimental. For this reason the "heroine" of the book and her appended "hero" are negligible studies, while all the villains of the piece are of enough interest to make this first novel excellent and absorbing reading. Both penetration and feeling are shown in the portrait of the girl "Eve"—an Eve who, without tasting the tree of knowledge, has managed to gain from the snake a cold-blooded sense of the commercial value of the apples

MARK ONLY. By T. F. Powys. Chatto and Windus. 7s.

From the notices printed on the dust-wrappers of Mr. Powys's new book I gather that he has achieved already a distinguished place amongst contemporary English novelists. Some critics have ventured to claim for him a place which will necessitate a readjusting of the seats of sundry amongst the mighty of English Fiction, and the author of "Black Bryony" and "The Left Leg" has certainly rare gift of characterisation and a courageous artistry which will bring him far. In "Mark Only," nevertheless, he has given us an appalling work. Mr. Powys has deliberately turned up a piece of carrion, and the heavy motion of the book, to me at least, resembles nothing more than the hum of hosts of carrion eaters disturbed at their filthy meal. We are assailed at once by their angry protest, wing and sting, and by the noisome stench of the ordure which has drawn them together.

Even in the chaste pages of Jefferies, rural England is not a pleasant thing, and such a sketch as "Uptil a Thorn," drawn out to novel length, can be a very disheartening performance, as Jefferies has only too clearly proved. If Mr. Powys has described his people correctly (and he is nothing if not realistic) the kindest wish one may form for this utterly rotten peasantry is such a disaster as overtook a more civilized people in our time.

The hamlet of Dodderdown, in which Mr. Powys has elected to hold his dissection, would seem to be the very source from which the crowded crime reports of the English weekly papers are drawn.

There is not a redeeming feature, not a lovable human being or characteristic anywhere in the story. Lust, murder, and greed are here and in their meanest form. Murder, simple and complex, cruelty (even a sadism which seems to have crawled out of the pages of Kraft Ebbing), seductions innumerable, all are turned up in turn by our disturber of carrion, and each plays its part with its accompanying hum and stench in the sordid performance. Even the children in Dodderdown—the hideously precocious and vermin-eaten children—have caught the infection, and their discourse is not of daisy chains and cowslip-balls, but rather of the cat which squealed so curiously when its foot was nailed to the barn door, and the little puppy that was drowned "after its eyes had been scooped out" by Mr. Tulke.

Mr. Powys has, I repeat, courage and strength and artistry, but, to me at least, this latest novel is a noisome thing, the more so, perhaps, because I read it on a Donegal hillside, in a country disfigured, indeed, by ruined cottages—remnants of '47; and other ruins, the result of recent happenings, but with the strong, sweet breath of the Altantic blowing through it amongst a people who are still clean and strong.

J. R.

DUBLIN PRIDE: The Evolution of a Girl. By Ewan Agnew. London: Cecil Palmer. 7s. 6d. net.

In "Dublin Pride" the development of the plot is worked out between December, 1913, and the first month of the world war. For "the evolution of a girl" this is rapid enough. For its period the story is not unduly political or religious, though the home rule and mixed marriage questions appear. It suggests rather a successful attempt to improve upon the conventional type of fiction which sold "Forget-Me-Not" and the "Family Herald" fifteen or twenty years ago.

The music-teaching daughter of a professor of Catholic theology (a layman, mark you) is first kissed, suddenly and passionately, in the Phoenix Park by a peer's son holding a minor appointment in Dublin Castle. The incident drives the Hon. Cyril to exile in America; but, "after all, it had been worth it: those few glorious moments in Phoenix Park had been worth any amount of subsequent suffering." Kathleen Marie next accepts a marriage proposal from a Liverpool engineer on top of a tram (and not in the Park, as that strong man and Protestant had intended). The engineer's kiss, however, is not given until after a traditionally English Christmas dinner—"roast turkey, plum pudding, crackling mince pies" and all. The last of these romantic operations takes place in the sweet Vale of Avoca. This time the gallant swain is a young journalist who had rescued the fair damsel in a London fog. He begs permission just to "steal one tiny one and then be good for evermore." Kathleen laughed at him. "Better not, I think. You never can tell. But you can kiss my knee if you like, only you must be very good and not even peep at anything else. See?" God, how tempting she was, sitting there, cool and beautiful, like some half-veiled water-nymph rising out of the lake. He bent down, put one hand under her leg and raised her knee reverently to his lips. The soft fragrance of her clothes almost maddened him "Thank you, dear," he said simply, "I promise, and shan't forget."

That, I think, is a distinct advance upon the serials in "Forget-Me-Not." But, if the editor will allow me to steal one tiny one, there is none of the real Dublin mud or Dublin purple in this book.

C. O'S.

BOOK CATALOGUES.

We have received from Messrs. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., Cambridge, a fine and varied catalogue which, even at a cursory glance, reveals many desirable things "both of the new and old." Mr. Heffer has, very wisely as I think, catered for both the rich collector and the poor; and while the former may stand knee deep in rich meadows of "firsts" and early printing, the poor will find pasture and to spare in that poor man's acre—the Supplement of Book Bargains.

Messrs. Dobell, 8 Bruton Street, London, send two interesting catalogues, Nos. 36 and 37, the first containing a fine collection of Autograph Letters, MSS. and Historical Documents, in which the "star turn" is certainly an unpublished letter, $3\frac{1}{2}$ pages 4to, by William Collins. In the second, No. 37, are some fine Wordsworth items, including an uncut Peter Bell, and the all-important two vol. edition of the Poems, 1807.

Messrs. Davis and Orioli (24 Museum Street, London, W.C.1) fully maintain in their new catalogue, No. 21, that reputation which they have achieved amongst collectors of modern "firsts." A remarkably fine "run" of Cunningham Graham's from 1895 to 1920, the almost unprocurable "Unprofessional Tales" of Norman Douglas, Machen's "Fantastic Tales," 1890, are amongst the finest things in a really fine catalogue.

We would strongly recommend all Irish book collectors to avail themselves of the offer made by Messrs. Heffer, Dobell, and Davis and Orioli to supply these catalogues, which are the best possible way of attaining a knowledge of book values.